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**КОРИСТЕЊЕ НА ЛИТЕРАТУРНИ ТЕКСТОВИ НА ЧАСОТ ПО АНГЛИСКИ  
ЈАЗИК**

**ЕФЕКТОТ НА ВОВЕДНАТА АКТИВНОСТ ВРЗ СТЕПЕНОТ НА  
УСВОЈУВАЊЕ НА ВОКАБУЛАР**

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**USING LITERARY TEXTS IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSROOM**

**THE EFFECT OF THE PRE-READING ACTIVITY ON VOCABULARY ACQUISITION**

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## **USING LITERARY TEXTS IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSROOM**

### **THE EFFECT OF THE PRE-READING ACTIVITY ON VOCABULARY ACQUISITION**

#### **Abstract**

Vocabulary is an important aspect in teaching and learning a foreign language. Therefore, teachers who are aware of the necessity of students mastering this aspect, and permanently developing it, are in a constant search for new ways of making this process enjoyable and pleasurable. Literary texts can certainly add to this. They play a significant role in vocabulary building, as well as in the whole the process of mastering a foreign language. The findings of many studies provide evidence that literature, if incorporated in the ELT program with suitable methods and strategies, can contribute to vocabulary growth in primary school students. Implicit and explicit vocabulary instruction, combined effectively through motivating and enjoyable activities, will without doubt lead to improvement in vocabulary acquisition. What is it that makes vocabulary acquisition easier through literature? There are more dimensions involved that justify incorporating literature in the classroom. They are the context, the emotional involvement of the reader, the interest in the plot and the personal respond to the story, which arises when the reader relates his existing schemata, patterns of knowledge and thinking, with the events in the story. This relation occurs in the pre-reading activity during which this schematic, background knowledge is revived, students' attention is focused and those lexical elements that are important for the understanding of the text are highlighted. But, to the best of my knowledge, there is no empirical evidence that if the target words are introduced as early as in the pre-reading activity this will contribute to better language acquisition. The aim of this study is not only to look for evidence that incorporating literature in the EFL classroom has a positive effect on vocabulary building, but also to see whether the pre-reading activity itself, could affect the final outcome of vocabulary acquisition. Another aim is to see to what extent it has an effect on vocabulary building.

**KEY WORDS:** Vocabulary, literary texts, schematic knowledge, pre-reading activity, vocabulary building

# **КОРИСТЕЊЕ НА ЛИТЕРАТУРНИ ТЕКСТОВИ НА ЧАСОТ ПО АНГЛИСКИ ЈАЗИК**

## **ЕФЕКТОТ НА ВОВЕДНАТА АКТИВНОСТ ВРЗ СТЕПЕНОТ НА УСВОЈУВАЊЕ НА ВОКАБУЛАР**

### **Апстракт**

Вокабуларот има големо значење во предавањето и изучувањето на странските јазици. Па така, наставниците кои се свесни за потребата на учениците да го владеат и трајно да го развијат овој сегмент од јазикот се во постојана потрага по нови начини кои би го направиле овој процес забавен и пријатен. Книжевните текстови можат многу да придонесат за постигнување на оваа цел. Тие играат важна улога во градењето на вокабуларот, како и во целиот процес на совладување на одреден странски јазик. Многу истражувања покажале дека доколку литературата се вклучи во наставата по англиски јазик, заедно со соодветни методи и стратегии, може многу да придонесе за збогатување на вокабуларот кај учениците од основните училишта. Директни и индиректни инструкции поврзани со новиот вокабулар, комбинирани со мотивирачки и забавни активности без сомнеж доведуваат до подобрување во усвојувањето на новиот фонд на зборови. Но, што е она што го прави изучувањето на нови зборови со помош на литературата значително полесно? Постојат повеќе аспекти кои го оправдуваат вклучувањето на литературата во училницата. Тоа се контекстот, емоционалната посветеност на читателот, заинтересираноста за содржината и личната реакција на приказната која се јавува откако читателот ќе ги поврзе неговите/нејзините постоечки, шематски начини и навики на знаење и однесување со настаните во приказната. Оваа врска настанува со активностите пред читање на текстот, додека се активира позадинското знаење на учениците, се фокусира нивното внимание и се нагласени оние лексички елементи кои се важни за разбирање и восприемање на текстот. Но, колку што ми е познато мене, не постојат докази дека доколку зборовите кои треба да се научат им се презентираат на учениците уште за време на активностите пред читање со сигурност ќе придонесе до подобро усвојување на јазикот. Целта на ова



истражување не е само да се бараат докази кои би покажале дека вклучувањето на литературата во изучувањето на англискиот јазик како странски јазик има позитивен ефект врз градењето на вокабуларот, туку исто така и да се согледа дека активностите пред читање влијаат на крајните резултати во усвојувањето на новиот фонд на зборови.

КЛУЧНИ ЗБОРОВИ: вокабулар, книжевен текст, шематско знаење, активности пред читање, градење на вокабулар

## **Contents:**

### **USING LITERARY TEXTS IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSROOM-THE EFFECT OF THE PRE-READING ACTIVITY ON VOCABULARY ACQUISITION**

Анстракт.....	
Introduction.....	
1. Literature in the language classroom.....	
1.1 Why using literature?.....	
1.2 Literature in Language Teaching- Historical Evolution.....	
1.3 Approaches to teaching literature.....	
1.4 Cultural understanding.....	
2. The complexity of reading-comprehension.....	
2.1 Teaching reading in the second language classroom.....	
2.2 Goals of teaching reading.....	
2.3 Intensive reading.....	
2.4 Extensive reading.....	
2.5 Reading-comprehension.....	
2.6 Pedagogic text modifications to increase comprehensibility and vocabulary acquisition.....	
3. Selecting a literary text.....	
3.1 Criteria for selecting a literary text.....	
3.2 Planning for reading.....	

3.2.1 Before-reading activities.....	
3.2.2 <i>During-reading activities</i> .....	
3.2.3 <i>After-reading activities</i> .....	
4. Vocabulary and reading.....	
4.1 The relationship between words and reading-comprehension.....	
4.2 Historical trends in second language vocabulary acquisition.....	
4.3 Reading- comprehension and vocabulary instruction.....	
4.4 Why teach vocabulary?.....	
4.5 Essential strategies for teaching vocabulary.....	
4.5.1 Intensive Vocabulary Instruction.....	
5. Literary texts in the EFL classroom.....	
5.1 The Effect of Literature on Vocabulary.....	
5.2 Literature as a context for teaching vocabulary.....	
5.3 Storybook reading and vocabulary building.....	
5.4 The effect of the pre-reading activity on vocabulary building.....	
6. Research methodology.....	
6.1 Research questions.....	
6.2 Method.....	
6.2.1 Participants.....	
6.2.2 Instruments.....	
6.2.3 Procedure.....	

6.2.4 Scoring.....	
6.3 Results.....	
7. Discussion.....	
7.1 Limitations.....	
8. Conclusion.....	
References.....	
<i>Appendix 1.....</i>	
<i>Appendix 2(a).....</i>	
<i>Appendix 2 (b).....</i>	
Appendix 3(a).....	
<i>Appendix 3(b).....</i>	
<i>Appendix 4 (a).....</i>	
Appendix 4(b).....	

## Introduction

Starting to learn a new language is very similar to stepping on an unknown ground. Very often it is found threatening by the students. Why? It is part of our human nature to be very cautious or even afraid when facing something new, unfamiliar to us. The same happens here. Students are out of the comfort boundaries, feeling insecure and not very comfortable on the new territory on which they are trying to find something familiar to hold on, something that resembles their own territory i.e. their native language. Acquiring a new language is a journey, a discovery process taken by the learner and the instructor together, the instructor being the one who “knows the way”. His main role is the one of a facilitator whose responsibility is to shape the students’ knowledge and behavior through a new language and a new culture. This is not an easy task at all as most of the teaching process consists of reshaping of the learners’ understanding of the grammatical rules, cultural concepts and trying to match the already existent linguistic apparatus with the aspects of the target language. While relating and contrasting the rules of the languages, the teacher is expected to free the learner from the stress barrier of the unknown, the fear of making mistakes and the potential feeling of embarrassment when making some. His/her other responsibility is to ease the conflicts that are triggered because of the effort of the learner to find similarity between the already acquired language and the target language, between the already internalized conceptions and the need for reshaping them and accepting new ones. Bearing in mind that most of the students are reluctant to accept and learn new linguistic and cultural concepts, the teacher must innovate, motivate and discover new ways of presenting the objectives of the lesson. Literature is one of the ways through which this can be accomplished. Literary texts do offer a lot. They can free the learner from the negative feelings related to learning and accepting a new language, lower the affective filter and fill the journey with pleasure and enjoyment. They offer richness and variety which provoke emotional responses from the learners; they stimulate their imagination, personally involve them into the learning process, and bridge the gap between the cultures. By bringing literature in the classroom, we contribute to cultural enrichment of the learners in the way that they become aware that people communicate

differently in different societies, which is part of the common human nature. They also become aware of the various structures and functions of the language with all its possibilities.

# **1. Literature in the language classroom**

## **1.1 Why using literature?**

“Literature is a particularly good source for developing students’ abilities to infer meaning and to make interpretations. This is because literary texts are often rich in multiple levels of meaning, and demand that the reader/learner is actively involved in “teasing out” the unstated implications and assumptions of the text” (Lazar, 1993, p. 19).

This idea is not claimed only by this eminent linguist, but by many more such as Brumfit and Carter, (as cited in Yeasmin, Azad and Ferdoush, 2011) who claim that “a literary text is authentic text, real language in context, to which we can respond directly” (p.15), or Kramsch (1993) who claims that literary texts provide learners with “opportunities for the dialogic negotiation of meaning” (p. 131).

Negotiation of meaning is the basis of representational language teaching. McRae (1996) suggests integration of text into teaching, mixing of the representational with the referential and development of language awareness. In addition to this, he stated the following:

“Language is richness and variety, not the monotone of singularity of vision and intent. As such it is language itself that demands a more representational approach to learning and teaching. For as soon as language begins to mean, it begins to expand its meaning, to make demands on its users, whether speakers, listeners, readers or writers. Imagination begins to operate...The move is from reference to preference: the learner begins to prefer one meaning rather than another, to go beyond the merely referential into personal preference and choice” (p. 19).

This is how he explains the personal involvement of the learner which is undeniably significant when it comes to learning a new language.

Literature goes beyond the technical, referent aspects of the language system. It teaches the learners to use the language creatively and critically, helps them develop cultural awareness and engages them imaginatively. As a result they are highly motivated, which

is the first and most important step. This cannot be achieved simply by providing learners with a text and asking them to read it. They should be instructed to evaluate how meaning is achieved. The apparatus that accompanies the texts should be carefully planned and should raise questions of opinion. As McRae (1996) claims, “controlled open response to language and the issues language raises is far and away the most fruitful teaching/learning resource available, if the teacher is willing to take advantage of it”. (p. 23). He adds that “context language learning introduces the fifth language skill which is thinking. The language/literature interface is probably the richest vein of learning potential for learners at all levels of language.” (p. 23).

Some other reasons for using literature in the classroom is that it is considered valuable authentic material and the teacher is the one to make it meaningful to the students. It can be adopted, modified so that it can be applied in the best way to suit the learners’ needs. Literary texts offer thousands of interpretations depending on the background knowledge of the learner. According to Collie and Slater, (as cited in Silva, 2001), one of the major benefits is that literature can transcend both time and culture, to speak directly to a reader in another country or a different period of history. These texts present various linguistic forms, uses, stylistics and rules of the written language as well as cultural language enrichment. They reflect the traditions, the customs and the way characters communicate, which enables them to understand the difference between referential and representational language. In this way, they learn that language can involve, and words can mean much more than explained in a dictionary, i.e. they go beyond the referential use of the words. While reading the texts they become engaged in the plot and forget about the difficulties and inhibitions they might have about grammatical rules and vocabulary. When choosing a text, the teacher should always bear in mind that the students’ beliefs about the usefulness of the text are very important, which means choosing the text together and discussing the benefits from it. Linguists claim that if the text provides good stimuli for personal involvement, it will without doubt contribute to higher linguistic competences of the reader/learner.

As mentioned above, the characters, the plot, the problems and questions that arise in these texts, engage the learners’ feelings, which results in affectionate and long-term



learning. It is the engagement of the fifth skill according to McRae (1996), that makes learning long-term, and as he claims they will be able to apply it in every other situation later in life. As Daskalovska and Dimova (2012) conclude “giving foreign language learners opportunities for discussion, evaluation and understanding the meaning of words and phrases, and developing their interpretational and inferential skills will make them more reflective and effective learners and users of the language“ (p. 1183).

Another goal of using literature is to develop a habit of reading. As many students would agree, extensive reading is the best way to acquire a language, but this should be preceded by developing good reading strategies and ability to make good choice of books according to the difficulty level and the linguistic knowledge of the learner. Sinclair, (as cited in Daskalovska and Dimova, 2012), argues that the role of the teacher is to help students “gradually develop the capacity for selecting English texts according to their own preferences and interests, as well as dealing with and understanding the language, discourse, style, form and contexts of these texts” (p.1184). According to Duff and Maley, (as cited in Daskalovska Dimova, 2012) there are three types of justification for using literary texts: linguistic, methodological and motivational. They further explain that the linguistic effects are that they offer samples of wide range of styles and difficulty. The methodological benefits are the opportunities for genuine interaction and the different styles, registers, genres, and motivational effect is why these texts can easily involve learners emotionally and elicit personal responses.

To conclude, literature nurtures the imagination and the thinking skill, it promotes personal growth, it makes the learners think critically, support their opinion, discuss and become good readers. It is a good authentic material and provides authentic input for language learning. It enables students to be exposed to actual samples of real life. It contributes to cultural enrichment in the way that certain aspects of the target culture are introduced and provides a wide range of lexical and communicative options, thus making the learner a more competent speaker of the language by extending its vocabulary and all of the language skills, and finally it involves the reader personally which means it relates his life with the plot of the literary text, which in turn makes the reader eager to find out what will happen next.

## **1.2 Literature in Language Teaching- Historical Evolution**

The role of literature in the tradition of second language teaching has changed over time. According to Duff and Maley, (as cited in Llach, 2007), it was the most frequent material in the grammar-translation method, namely, learners of the target language read and translated the texts as illustrations of the grammar rules. As they explain, the interest was not on content, but on form. Students learned the rules of grammar and the lexical items. Collie and Slater (1987) claim the same, that literature was the main input source in this period but with the rise of structuralism, the functional-notional method and the audio-lingual method, literature was neglected. The representatives of these approaches did not consider literature to be good authentic material or to have communicative function. According to Carter (2007), the comeback of literature was in 1970/80s with the growth of communicative language teaching methods, when literature was recognized as a powerful tool which offers authenticity, embeds imaginative and representational uses of the language. This approach promoted learner-centered teaching, requiring the students to be independent, critical, logical and analytical in their thinking and devote time to self-learning under minimum supervision and literature can offer that definitely. As McRae points out, "once learners have gone beyond the "survival level" and they want to express their own meanings and interpret other peoples', they need representational language, language which involves", (McRae, 1991, p. 3).

Kramsch and Kramsch, (as cited in Carter, 2007), term this as "proficiency movement" and stress the function of literature as "an opportunity to develop vocabulary acquisition, reading strategies and the training of critical thinking, that is, reasoning skills" (p. 6). They also pointed out that since it shared characteristics with other discourses, the same pedagogic procedures could be used for the treatment of all texts. According to Brumfit, (as cited in Carter, 2007), there was another reason for including literature in the English language classroom and that is the fact that literature enabled students to define themselves "through contact with others' experience" (p. 7).

The communicative approach offered opportunities for bridging the gap between the native and the target language through reading, which according to Kramsch (2001) was the most important aspect or as she said “mind the gap” could be the motto of the language learner about to board the train to unfamiliar languages and cultures” (p. 4). By growing into our own culture and our own voice, we cannot see the gap in our first language, but the acquisition of a foreign language makes the gap apparent. Widdowson, (as cited in Lazar, 1993, p. 18.) stated that asking students to explore the literary language encourages them to think about the norms of language use. This approach teaches them to appreciate the richness and variety of the language and as a result they become more sensitive to the features of it.

### **1.3 Approaches to teaching literature**

As Bedi (2011) claims “...the separation of literature from language is a false dualism since literature is language and language can indeed be literary” (p. 1). This is a strong argument for integrating literature as a powerful pedagogic tool when teaching a foreign language. As he further explains, when teaching language through literature, the teachers’ concern should not only be to help students master certain structures and forms, but it should also involve “acquiring the ability to interpret discourse in its entire social and cultural context” (p. 1). Literary texts should not be seen as separate and very different from non-literary texts, because this would mean separation of literature from language and this is not possible. Widdowson (1970) suggests that the procedures used to interpret literary discourse are the same as the procedures used for interpreting any kind of discourse , while Carter and Long, (as cited in Bedi, 2011), described three main approaches to the teaching of literature: the cultural model, the language model and the personal growth model.

The Cultural model represents the traditional approach. This model encourages learners to understand different cultures and ideologies in relation to their own. It is a teacher – centered model and offers little opportunities for extended language work and that’s why it was rejected.

In the Language model the focus is on the linguistic aspect mainly, while the literary aspect is neglected. This model enables learners to access a text in a systematic and methodical way and involves many language teaching strategies, such as: prediction exercises, creative writing, role-plays, summary writing and many other. They are all used to help the learners acquire specific linguistic goals. Carter and McRae (as cited in Bedi, 2011) describe this model as a 'reductive' approach.

The Personal growth model embraces the abovementioned models "by focusing on the particular use of language in a text, as well as placing it in a specific cultural context", (Bedi, 2011, p. 2). Learning takes place as learners try to interpret text and construct meaning on the basis of their own experience. This model also helps learners develop knowledge of ideas and language content and formal schemata through different themes and topics.

From the abovementioned we can conclude that these three models of teaching focus on different aspects of the text. The first one perceives the text as a cultural artifact, the second treats it as a pure language and focuses on the grammatical and structural analysis and the third, as the name suggests, stimulates personal growth. As these models focus only on one aspect of the literary text a need for an integrated approach arises.

Another approach to teaching literature is the Stylistic approach. It has served to explain how interpretation is formed or new aspects of interpretations revealed, how texts are understood by readers according to their interaction with the linguistic organization of the text. But as any other approach, this one also has its own weaknesses, one of them being that it is too reductive and creates scientific objectivity. Many linguists wrote about this approach, among whom Brumfit and Carter (1986), Widdowson (1975), Carter and McRae (1996) and many others. They all discussed the pedagogic perspectives of stylistic studies of literature in English within a classroom research perspective. Stylistics has contributed to a rise of diverse methods in the teaching of literature, among which are those methods that focus on textual transformations.

Literature became more dominant in the context of second language acquisition under the influence of Vygotski, who recognized and presented the fact that culture should be perceived as a process in which learners directly engage and participate. So the new role of literature was emphasized, the one of “fostering self-awareness and identity in interaction with a new language and culture”, (Carter, 2007, p. 10). This has also affected classroom practice, the way teachers treated literary text. There was no correct way or single correct approach when working on a text. Each text was to be taken in its own specific way, depending on the previous knowledge of the reader and his/her goals. The result of this shift was a process-based methodology, which encouraged learners to be active participants in the linguistic and cultural processes. Carter (2007) concluded that literature has taken a more dominant role in first, second and foreign language education and Chris Brumfit has played a significant part in it.

#### **1.4 Cultural understanding**

We are aware that learning a language involves a number of components, one of them being the cultural factors. These factors make language acquisition more than just learning to use a set of linguistic structures. As Cruz mentions “language is a receptacle and a transmitter of a habit, traditions, routines, social and economical context, among many other things and, when mastered via literature or poetry, it can reflect the human soul” (Cruz, 2010, p. 1).

One of the goals of integrating literary texts in teaching English is the cultural role of literary reading. Hanauer (2001) explains that the meaning construction process depends on the beliefs, habits, traditions that are accepted in the society. According to Hanauer (2001), incorporating literary reading tasks in the language classroom provides language learners access to cultural knowledge of the target language community (p. 39). He develops this argument by proposing a principle for the teaching of cultural knowledge known as “focus-on-cultural understanding” and enables the language learner to focus on the meaning construction processes. Cultural knowledge is of great importance because it provides all the referential knowledge to take place or in other words “cultural

knowledge is important in that it provides a basis through which understanding is achieved” (Hanauer, 2001, p. 392). According to his teaching principle, every culture develops its own set of designs of meaning making, through which the individual can express him/herself. Literature helps the learner become familiar with the community’s ways of constructing and producing meaning. He claims that there are three different types of knowledge: knowledge of literary texts, knowledge of ways of reading literature and knowledge of interpretations of literature.

“Literature is a valuable source of cultural knowledge precisely because it does present a personal interpretation of the life and values as the author of the literary work experiences them” (Hanauer, 2011, p. 396).

Literary texts offer opportunities for the language learner to be exposed to various interpretations of cultural phenomena by members of the cultural community. It enables the learners to focus on the cultural aspects of the meaning-making process. The task of the teacher is to accept the students’ understanding of the literary work as a form of culturally specific meaning construction and to compare it with other culturally specific ways of constructing meaning, which will result in increase of awareness in learners on this subject. In other words, learners would realize that language meaning is not only constructed by meaning of words, but also by the internal beliefs and traditions. When they have understood this, it would be easier for them to analyze, interpret and evaluate literary works which originate from different cultures. According to Widdowson (1994), language cannot be used correctly and appropriately if one does not obey the rules of usage of the English speaking community and if one does not make it one’s own, give it one’s voice, because language is at the same time culture and voice. A gap opens when we try to acquire a foreign language, whose norms and beliefs are unfamiliar to us. To bridge the gap one needs to be open to perceive the culture of the people who speak the language.

## **2. The complexity of reading-comprehension**

### **2.1 Teaching reading in the second language classroom**

Applying literary texts in the classroom calls for effective reading which is essential for success in acquiring a second language. According to Silberstain (1994), reading is an active process. The students interact with the text in order to create meaningful discourse and predictions about the content of the text: "Reader expectations are based on reader's prior knowledge", (Silberstain, 1994, p. 7). This is also known as reader's schemata. Or as Mickulecky explains:

"Reading is a conscious process and unconscious thinking process. The reader applies many strategies to reconstruct the meaning that the author has intended to transfer. The reader does this by comparing the information in the texts to his or her background knowledge and prior experience" (Mickulecky, 2008, p. 1).

The prior knowledge of the reader organized in categories, all related in a schematic network, decides on how the text will be understood. While reading, the reader notices and compares trying to find similarities. Prior knowledge is activated by the textual information and this prior knowledge in turn activates expectations about the events in the text. This process exists until comprehension has occurred. What the reader will notice in the text is determined by the readers' first language schemata. How they will interpret the text varies depending on their different expectations.

She further explains that language knowledge and thinking patterns are socially constructed within a cultural setting and each language/culture fosters its own way in understanding the world. As a result, readers from different cultural backgrounds can read the same text and construct different models of the text means because of the different schemata which are socially and culturally conditioned. Integrating literary texts in EFL will help students acquire the ways of thinking about the text that are practiced by native speakers of English. She claims that:

"Learning to read and comprehend a second language requires learning a secondary literacy: alternative cultural interpretations, cultural beliefs about language and discourse, and culture-specific formal and content schemata. It is important to realize that learning to read effectively in a second language literally

alters the learners cognitive structures and values orientations”, (Mickulecky, 2008, p. 2).

Reading skills are cognitive processes that a reader uses in order to make sense of a text and these skills are best developed with literary texts. The teacher should instruct and train his/her students to use strategies that would help them understand the text better and these new strategies initiate cognitive changes which resemble a new thinking process. These reading skills include automatic decoding, previewing and predicting, paraphrasing, drawing conclusions, visualizing, reading critically, skimming, guessing the meaning of unknown words from the context, recognizing patterns of relationship, locating topic sentences, scanning, questioning, knowing why a text is being read, stating the main idea and identifying genre. When these skills are mastered by the students they will be able to “think in English”. But as Mickelucky (2008) claims, reading instruction needs to be based on training ESL and EFL students in new ways of talking and thinking about texts. According to Brown, (as cited in Mickulecky, 2008), when students are conscious of the thinking processes they can monitor their comprehension and apply appropriate strategies as needed for comprehending a text. Street (as cited in Mickulecky, 2008) stated that research has also shown that literacy is a cultural artifact and beliefs and values are part of it.

Nation (2001) introduced his effective approach to second-language vocabulary acquisition, which he claimed is very important for effective reading. It combines direct instruction, extensive reading and multiple exposures to the same words. He claimed that in order to read well, students need to develop a schema of the reading process, i.e. to understand that reading is thinking, to explain how they make sense of the text, to read extensively in English, to break the habit of reading every word, to master the basic 2000 words of the English language, to learn to guess meaning from context, to make connections between what they already know and what they are reading and to learn to vary their reading rate depending on the purpose of reading. Considering all this, students will learn to read in English best in a class that includes extensive reading for pleasure, interactive lessons on specific reading skills where students can explain their thinking,



practice in fluency development, direct instruction of vocabulary, and opportunities for manipulation of the target words.

According to Freebody and Luke (1999), the reader has more than one role when reading. He is a code breaker, a text user, a text participant and a text analyst. As a code reader he should use his knowledge of sound-system relationship and alphabet. But code breaking is not sufficient for successful reading. The reader needs to be a text participant as well, which means that he should be able to connect his background knowledge of the world, culture and structure with the text. Being a good text user means that the reader knows well what successful reading is and can participate in the social activities which are constructed around a written text again on the basis of previous experiences they have had with their parents or teachers. As a text analyst, the reader knows to read critically and is aware of what is assumed and implied. He/she is also conscious of the manipulative nature of every text.

Gibbons (2002) claims that “the knowledge readers bring to the text is critical in their ability to get meaning from it” (p. 83). Reading is a source of learning and a way of teaching other goals. As a source of learning it can establish previously learned vocabulary and grammar.

Nation remarks that “as a goal in its own right, reading can be a source of enjoyment and a way of gaining knowledge of the world” (Nation, 2009, p. 49). He adds that equal time should be given to each of the four aspects: meaning-focused input, meaning-focused output, language-focused learning and fluency development. Meaning-focused input means providing input through listening and reading where learner’s focus is on understanding the message and where only a small proportion of language features are outside the learners’ present level of proficiency. Meaning-focused output involves the learners producing language through speaking and writing where the learners’ focus is on others understanding the message. Language-focused learning means deliberate attention to language features both in the context of meaning-focused input and meaning-focused outputs well as in decontextualised learning and teaching. Fluency development involves making the best use of what is already known. The best-known kind of fluency development is speed reading where learners focus on increasing their reading speed

while still maintaining good comprehension. According to Nation (2009), there is a list of principles to be followed as part of a successful reading programme. When practicing the meaning-focused aspect, the teacher should train the students to search for information, to read for fun, to read critically always taking care of the appropriateness of the language proficiency level. When working on meaning-focused output, the teacher should make sure that reading is related to the rest of the language skills. In language-focused learning, learners should be helped to develop the skills and knowledge needed for effective reading, they should be given training and practice in a range of reading strategies such as previewing, setting a purpose, predicting, posing questions connecting to background knowledge, paying attention to text structure and guessing words from context. When working on fluency development, the teacher should focus on speed reading practice in word recognition and in reading for understanding which implies reading familiar material that will incite enjoyment and motivation. The learner has all the needed knowledge to read and comprehend. She/he withdraws it from his/her previous experiences. The ideas, the words and sentences and the organization of the text come from the learner. It is possible to learn to read a foreign language without being able to speak it, but learning to read a foreign language is much easier if the learner already has some spoken control of the language features that are being met in the reading.

## **2.2 Goals of teaching reading**

Bloom (1994) developed an influential and enduring taxonomy of general educational objectives. According to this taxonomy anything that can be taught and learned is classified in one or more of the three great domains:

- The psychomotor domain, which refers to the mind and body working together to produce physical performance
- The affective domain, which refers to attitudes, interests and appreciations
- The cognitive domain which refers to the intellectual skill including the recall of recognition of information, comprehension of the information and the development of logical and rational thought skills

The reasons why people read belong to three domains. This was proved by Greany and Newman, (as cited in Sadoski, 2004) who empirically studied children's reasons for reading through questionnaires and found three underlying factors that they termed as "utility, enjoyment and escape" (p. 46). Utility refers to reading in order to be successful in school or life, enjoyment means reading for pleasure and escape refers to reading to avoid boredom. As a result, we can conclude that there are affective and cognitive goals of teaching reading. In the affective domain two goals need to be addressed. The first one is developing positive attitudes towards reading i.e. their perceptions of their competence and their disposition toward their future programme should be positive:

"Students should experience success regularly and approach reading confidently, with a "can do" spirit, rather than avoiding it because it is painful and frustrating" (Sadoski, 2004, p. 48). The second goal is developing personal interests and tastes in reading or as Sadoski (2004) claims, "interest builds upon a positive attitude but goes beyond it. Having an interest in reading means having the motivation to read and to respond affectively, to seek to enlarge our self-understanding and our sense of self-worth through reading" (p. 49).

Cognitive goals involve developing the use of reading as a tool to solve problems. One aspect of this goal is educational reading i.e. reading texts in which all the accumulated knowledge, including traditions, values, myths, truths, scientific findings are preserved and passed on through educational reading. Another aspect of the utilitarian goal of reading is emancipation, which refers to the ability of reading to free individuals or societies from oppression and dogma. This aspect is seen as liberal, in other words reading can provoke challenging and changing established conventions.

Another goal of teaching reading is developing the fundamental competencies of reading at succeeding higher levels of independence. Sadoski explains that "when these competencies of reading have been taught and learned, the reader is equipped to pursue reading as a continuing, lifelong endeavor" (Sadoski, 2004, p. 53). These competencies can be attained to some extent in succeeding stages.

He refers to three fundamental competencies in the contemporary parlance of reading as decoding, comprehension, and response. If decoding is saying something, comprehension is understanding something, getting its meaning. Whereas decoding involves producing a spoken analog of printed language, comprehension involves producing thought analog of printed language. Understanding also means trying to grasp the author's intentions, but reading at its fullest includes not only understanding but also reflecting on what is read, evaluating it, comparing it with what is already known from other reading or from direct experience. He claims that there are three levels of comprehension: the literal level, the inferential level or interpretive level and the critical level.

The literal level involves literal comprehension, interpreting the author's words in a given sentence in a way that has meaning to us, but without considering and weighing the implications of any interpretations we may have. The level of inferential comprehension is the level of comprehending what is implied, but not explicitly stated. It goes far beyond the determination of word meanings. Response involves a personal reaction to what is read, the contemplation of the ideas and feelings evoked by the text, responding to the text both cognitively and affectively. Critical reading is an aspect of the cognitive level, it involves open-minded assessment of work's form, style, depth and credibility. Appreciation is another aspect of this type and is extension of critical reading. Through careful evaluation and discrimination readers personalize the challenging new ideas and develop heightened internal standards. Application is affective response and it involves the construction of knowledge by the reader or learning, which happens because of the connection between what the reader already knows and what he/she encounters in the text.

### **2.3 Intensive reading**

Intensive reading is a means of increasing learners' knowledge of language, features and their control of reading strategies. It can also improve their comprehension skills. It fits into the language-focused strand of a course. One goal of intensive reading can be to determine what language features will get attention in the course and comprehension of the text. The language features are set in the communicative context of a text and the focus is on these features. This can help to avoid the interference between vocabulary items or grammatical features. When incorporating intensive reading, the focus of the teaching should be on items that occur in a wide range of texts. The major priority should be making a tomorrow's text easier by making a good choice today. Nation (2009) suggests achieving this by following several principles:

- focus on items that occur often in a language as a whole
- focus on strategies that can be used with most texts
- quick dealing with infrequent items
- practicing these items and strategies in several texts

When applying this technique the focus can be on many aspects: comprehension, vocabulary, grammar, cohesion, information structure, genre features, strategies, sound-spelling relations and some other aspects. We can conclude that an intensive reading exercise is good if it is made according to the following criteria:

- it directs the learner's attention to features of the text that can be found in almost any other text or to strategies for dealing with any text
- provides the teacher and the learners with useful information about the learners' performance on the exercise
- it focuses on items and strategies that apply to any text
- requires the learners to read the text
- provides useful feedback for the learners and the teacher (Nation, 2009)

## **2.4 Extensive reading**

It fits into the meaning-focused input and fluency development strands of a course, depending on the level of the books that the learners read. When the books contain only few unknown words and grammar items, extensive reading provides the conditions for meaning-focused input. When the books are very easy, extensive reading provides the conditions for fluency development. According to Nation (2009, p.50):

“Learning through extensive reading is largely incidental learning, that is, the learners’ attention is focused on the story not on items to learn. As a result, learning gains tend to be fragile and thus it is important to have quantity of input with substantial opportunities for vocabulary repetition”.

A good extensive reading programme should be based on a set of principles, the major one being that during extensive reading learners should be interested in what they are reading and should be focused on the meaning of the text, rather than the learning of the language features of the text. Some other characteristics of this type of reading are:

- Extensive reading occurs if most of the running words in a text are already familiar to the learner or do not inhibit the process of reading-comprehension
- It provides plenty of interesting and appropriate reading, texts selected according to learners’ judgments

According to Nation (2009), teachers should set, encourage and monitor large quantity of extensive reading. They should support and supplement extensive reading with language-focused learning and fluency development through vocabulary growth by explicit vocabulary instruction. Reading should be the main activity and other activities should occupy only a very small proportion of the time. Additional activities to motivate reading, such as records on the students’ opinion about the book should take some more time. Learners need to read many books in order to gain control of the high frequency words of English. Vocabulary learning from extensive reading can be encouraged by introducing before reading activities, such as skimming and then selecting five or six new words to focus on, deliberate study of the new, repeated words, reporting on a word that they met while reading, using a dictionary while reading, helping learners move systematically through the graded levels. Other ways of supporting vocabulary acquisition

while learning is by glossing i.e. providing meanings of words in L1 or in L2 a simple definition in the margin next to the line containing the unknown word. Computer-assisted reading effectively individualizes intensive reading by allowing learners to seek help of various kinds where it is needed in a speedy way. Elaboration or rewriting of the text, but with certain adding to the original text rather than removing and replacing, can also offer good vocabulary acquisition support. Research shows that elaborated texts seem to work about as well as simplified texts.

To conclude, extensive reading involves a large quantity of varied, self-selected enjoyable reading at a reasonably fluent speed. (Day and Bamford, as cited in Nation, 2009).

## **2.5 Reading-comprehension**

According to Snow (2002), reading- comprehension capacity builds on successful initial reading instruction, and the fact that children who can read words accurately and rapidly, are expected to progress well in comprehension. In addition, children with significant stores of world knowledge and good oral language skills are also likely to become good comprehenders. He defines reading comprehension “as the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language” (Snow 2002, p. 11).

The reader, the text and the activity, are the three dimensions that define comprehension as a phenomenon that occurs within a larger socio-cultural context. Comprehension is shaped by the reader, but all of these aspects interact one with another. As Snow (2002) explains:

“Reader, text and activity are also interrelated in dynamic ways that vary across pre-reading, reading and post-reading. It is important to distinguish between what the reader brings to reading and what the reader takes from reading. In the pre-reading period the reader arrives with a host of characteristics, including cognitive, motivational, language and nonlinguistic capabilities, along with a particular level of fluency. During the reading micro-period some of these reader characteristics

may change. During the post-reading micro-period some of these characteristics may change again” (p. 12).

The process of comprehension also has another aspect and that is macro-developmental aspect. But this aspect is more inert as it changes over longer periods of time as the reader matures and develops cognitively, as the reader gains increasing experience with more challenging texts and as the reader benefits from instruction.

Gibbons (2002), also discusses the reading theory and is persuaded that all effective readers have something in common i.e. they use different kinds of knowledge simultaneously. Knowledge of phonics is not enough as it will not help you interpret the text. It is the background knowledge and the knowledge of how a language works that enables readers to predict the words they are reading in the text. According to Goodman (as cited in Gibbons, 2002), there are three kinds of knowledge that are important for inferring meaning: semantic knowledge, syntactic knowledge and graphophonic knowledge. Effective readers use different kinds of knowledge depending on what they are reading. A problem arises when you are robbed of the ability to use your background knowledge which happens with EFL/ESL learners who do not share the same cultural knowledge and rely mostly on the graphophonic knowledge. According to the schema theory, which claims that the information we have accumulated is organized in patterns which are interrelated as a result of the previous experiences, effective readers draw on this knowledge which influences the comprehension process. Wallace, (as cited in Gibbons, 2002) suggests that this schematic knowledge is of two types: knowledge of the content and knowledge of the kind of genre. These types of knowledge enable the reader to predict on the basis of previous participations in similar reading experiences, but if they lack this kind of knowledge or if it is different than we may expect a variety of interpretations.

Snow (2002) talks about four aspects of reading comprehension: the reader, the text, the activity and the context. In order to understand, the reader must have a wide range of capacities and abilities such as attention, memory, inference, visualization ability, motivation, and various types of knowledge-vocabulary, topic knowledge, linguistic and discourse knowledge, knowledge of specific comprehension strategies. The responsibility



of the teacher is to instruct the students how to become independent and in achieving this they can use a variety of comprehension strategies. The type of the text also has a large effect on comprehension. Texts can range in content, linguistic structures, style and genre and all these interact with the reader's knowledge. Activities are created for a purpose and they require different levels of processing, depending again on the difficulty of the activity and the capabilities of the reader. According to Tharp and Gallimore, (as cited in Gibbons, 2002), children's acquisition of knowledge is influenced by five characteristics of the socio-cultural context, which they call activity settings. They are the identity of the participants, how the activity is defined, the timing of the activity, the motivation for the activity and why children should participate in the activity.

## **2.6 Pedagogic text modifications to increase comprehensibility and vocabulary acquisition**

Although the most popular trend in teaching a foreign language and enhancing vocabulary is the use of authentic texts for all levels, many linguists believe that students reading these texts might face many difficulties. Teachers should make some modifications to make them suit the pedagogical needs of the learners. A review of literature presented in the work of O'Donnell (2009) reveals strong arguments for the use of both authentic and pedagogically modified texts. In this study she suggests that "authentic texts can be modified so as to increase comprehensibility without sacrificing L2 discourse features that make such passages well suited for L2 instruction" (p. 513). As she explained, she designed this study to measure the influence of pedagogical modification on readers' comprehension and vocabulary recognition with special focus on one modification technique - textual elaboration. She wanted to assess the effect of this technique on L2 Spanish reader's global comprehension and vocabulary recognition immediately after reading short, authentic literary selections. The findings of the study indicated that textual elaboration can help learners improve comprehension and vocabulary recognition at the same time preserving the authenticity of the text. She assumed that the main reason for this was the linguistic support that this technique provided, which enabled readers to better understand the text. But all educators do not

agree with this. Some argue that these texts burden the reader with their linguistic and socio-cultural complexities which results in poor motivation for reading. Most of the learners have limited linguistic competences and skills so they find it very difficult to manage texts which are lexically and syntactically complex and conceptually unfamiliar. This makes the reading process overwhelming because the text is not suitable to the learners' cognitive abilities. She suggests that this cognitive burden can be eased by providing linguistic support i.e. by modifying the text or as Long (as cited in O'Donnell, 2009) claims, simplification decreases the linguistic complexity of syntactical constructions and lexical items.

According to Parker and Chaudron (as cited in O'Donnell, 2009), elaboration involves the offsetting of unfamiliar linguistic terms by the use of synonyms, restatements, explanations and rhetorical signaling in the L2.

There are justifiable reasons for using authentic reading materials. They expose learners to cultural and socio-cultural elements that are embedded in these texts and serve as models of linguistic excellence. However, pedagogically simplified texts are better understood by L2 readers but their comprehension lacks conceptuality. As O'Donnell states "meaning derivation is perfunctory and superficial with little intellectual substance and merit" (O'Donnell 2009, p. 515).

According to Berhardt (as cited in O'Donnell, 2009), literary texts are so difficult for students because when readers approach these texts, the only resources at their disposal are their limited linguistic skills and they lack implicit knowledge that the native-speaking group possesses.

Although research has some evidence that readers of linguistically simplified texts usually do better when tested on reading-comprehension, the impoverished reading environment prevents them from demonstrating an ability to understand the text abstractly, conceptually and holistically. Ross et al. (1991) concluded that readers of elaborated texts scored higher than the readers of both simplified and unmodified versions. Kim (2006) tested the influence of lexical elaboration with 297 Korean ESL college level learners. He focused on acquisition of English vocabulary after reading texts modified with either

explicit or implicit lexical elaboration. He concluded that both explicit and implicit lexical elaboration aided meaning recognition and vocabulary.

The study of O'Donnel (2009), left many questions unanswered, one of them being the issue of readers using their limited cognitive and attentional resources when reading L2 literary texts. What we can conclude from what has been said is that pedagogically modified texts are more appropriate for lower level students.

### **3. Selecting a literary text**

#### **3.1 Criteria for selecting a literary text**

The first criterion when choosing a text is the students' cultural background. The teacher should always bear in mind that their social and political expectations may help or obscure their understanding of the text. But sometimes what is new and unknown may awaken students' interest. Another criterion is the students' linguistic proficiency which includes familiarity with the usual norms of language use and recognizing when they are subverted, students' ability to infer, will the students be motivated to enjoy in the text or maybe they will be demotivated by the difficulties of the language. Another criterion is students' literary background which refers to their literary competence in their mother tongue which may help them to read and interpret literature in English efficiently.

The teacher can use different techniques to apply literature in the language classroom such as language analysis, comparison and contrast, expansion, media transfer, reconstruction, reduction and the replacement technique. When analyzing, the language of the text is the main focus. Comparison and contrast require that the students find similarities or differences between two topic-related texts. Expansion is another technique for working with literature, students have to add certain elements or predict what happens after the story finishes. When working with the technique matching, students are given two groups of items, which they must link taking into account both syntax and meaning. Media transfer means transforming a text from one medium into another, for example from poetry to prose or from written to oral. Reconstruction allows students to look for or think of certain elements in a text which have been omitted or jumbled. Reduction is used when the teacher wants to teach the students how to make a short summary of the text and keep the meaning. The replacement technique requires replacing some text elements with others of the same kind (Snow, 2002).

### **3.2 Planning for reading**

According to Gibbons (2002), reading activities should help readers understand the particular text they are reading and they should help readers develop good reading strategies for reading other texts. This means that we could make long term contribution to effective reading. If the teacher explains the unknown words before the children read the text, they will understand the text, but this will not have a long term effect on their reading strategies and they won't be able to cope with unknown words they will meet later in other texts. In other words teachers should offer explicit strategies for dealing with unknown vocabulary when reading other texts.

Most authors suggest dividing the planning into three sections: activities that will be done before the reading, while the reading is going on and activities that will be done after the book has been read. This framework offers a very effective plan for working with texts. As mentioned before when choosing a text the teacher should always consider the content of the text, how familiar it is to the students, the genre, the connectives and conjunctions, use of pronouns, auxiliary verbs, long sentences, phrases and idioms.

### **3.2.1 Before-reading activities**

The goal of these activities is to prepare the student to deal with linguistic and cultural difficulties and to activate prior knowledge. These activities should not deal with every difficulty, but they should develop students' sense of what they will be reading about, so that they will be prepared and will be less dependent on the words in the text. When they already have some sense of the overall meaning they will be able to understand more linguistically complex language (Gibbons, 2002).

Here are some examples of these kinds of activities. They all provide a context that helps the teacher lead the students into what is to come next and helps them understand the major concepts and ideas of the text. In this phase it is suggested that the teacher uses any particular vocabulary and language patterns that occur in the text while interacting with the children. The activities presented below are taken from the book „Scaffolding Language, Scaffolding Learning: Teaching Second Learners in the Mainstream Classroom“ by Pauline Gibbons (2002).

***Predicting from words is*** an activity which requires students to develop a semantic web around the given word. This makes them predict about the topic of the text.

### ***Predicting from Title or First Sentence***

The teacher writes up the title on the board and the students try to predict what kind of text it is and what the text will be about. The teacher can guide the class in a way that will help them deal with the major concepts in the text.

### ***Predicting from a Key Illustration***

This activity asks the students to predict from a picture taken from the book what the text is about and words that might occur in the text.

### ***Sequencing illustrations***

The teacher gives the students a set of pictures and asks them to order the pictures into a possible sequence.

### ***Reader Questions***

The teacher introduces the topic or the title of the text. The students ask questions they think the text has the answers to. The teacher writes the questions on the board and after, while reading the text, the students look for the answers.

### ***Storytelling***

In order to prepare the students, the teacher tells the story simply and draws on the board or shows the illustrations in the book.

### ***Storytelling in the Mother Tongue***

Before reading the story in English the teacher tells it in the children's first language. This shows respect for all of the languages as means of communication.

### ***Sharing Existing Knowledge***

Students discuss what they already know about this topic and make predictions.

The author suggests that we should not reduce before-reading work, because the more time we spend on these activities, the easier the reading will be and students will be prepared to read for meaning. The greatest advantage of the integrated approach is that students are developing an overall schema for the topic and vocabulary and language are associated with broad concepts.

### ***3.2.2 During-reading activities***

These activities are intended to involve the reader actively in the text and to model good reading strategies. Interrogating and interacting with the text are unconscious processes. The aim of this phase makes these processes explicit and demonstrates strategies for reading for meaning (Gibbons, 2002). Gibbons (2002) suggests some of them.

#### ***Modeled reading***

The teacher reads the text aloud, using appropriate pausing and expression and tries to bring the text to life. The students see whether their predictions are correct.

#### ***Skimming and scanning the text***

These activities are very useful and are usually used in the course books. Skimming allows students to understand the main concepts and events. When they scan the text they also read fast, but the purpose is to look out for particular information. The teacher should point out that we read in different ways depending on the purposes for reading. The main goal of these activities is to get a general idea and a sense of what is to happen next.

#### ***Rereading for detail***

The purpose of this activity is to make sure that they have understood the information. They can underline the new words or phrases and discuss these in pairs . The teacher

should remind them of the strategies they can use to work out the meaning of unknown words such as the language that surround the word in the text, our knowledge of the topic, and what we know about similar words. We are familiar with many of these strategies and we have practiced them in the classroom often, but would like to present some of them as useful ways of helping students. The teacher should instruct the students always to read the whole sentence and to look at other clues to meaning that come before and after the word. The teacher can also help them by explaining the function and category of the word and see if they can decide on the word parts if the word is complex. Students should not be encouraged to rely on a dictionary only as it slows up reading. When students read a new text, we should always remind them of these strategies.

***Shared book*** is an activity that is usually used with younger learners when they are introduced to short books. The teacher should introduce the topic before introducing the reading activities, and then read the book/text aloud several times, encouraging students to join in as they remember or recognize words or phrases.

### ***Word masking***

Some of the words can be masked with small pieces of paper and then the students are asked to predict what the word is. All word categories can be masked, as not only content, but also functional words are very important for predicting the meaning.

### ***Pause and predict***

As the teacher is reading, he/she stops and asks questions about the next events that might happen. The goal is to engage learners in the process of meaning making.

### ***Shadow reading***

The teacher reads the text and records the reading. Students listen to the reading and read along with the recording. This type of activity demonstrates how meaning is made



through text and how intonation, stress and the patterns of spoken language are related to the words on the page.

### ***Summarizing the text***

When the students are able to summarize the text, the teacher can be sure that they have understood it. Gibbons (2002) suggests some ways to help students practice summarizing skills.

- Instruct the students that when writing a summary the students should focus only on the most important points
- Make the students suggest a title for each paragraph and then with the teacher's support the students can write two or three sentences under each paragraph title. All these will give the short summary of the text
- Ask the students to think of the shortest version of the text and then the others will think of the missing parts
- They can work in pairs and explain the key points to each other in less than one minute
- Students can work in groups and task is deciding on the most important sentence in the text that is central to the story

### ***Jigsaw reading***

This kind of activity is very useful as it gives reading a real purpose. It provides an authentic context for developing summarizing skills because each group of experts must decide on the key points they are later going to share with others.

### ***Reading aloud***

This activity plays an important role in the development of reading competence. It helps learners recognize that good readers make meaning. The teacher may choose to read only part of the book and leave it for them to finish.

### ***3.2.3 After-reading activities***

As soon as the learners are familiar with the text and no longer have comprehension difficulties in reading it the teacher can introduce the last phase of activities. These activities should fulfill three major purposes. First, the text can be used as a basis for specific language study, such as focus on a particular item of grammar. These activities give students the freedom to experiment with their creativity and imagination and predict or act in drama or simply transfer the information into a different form, a time line or a diagram or poetry. These activities should be created in the way that they always require students to get back to the text and check on specific information. (Gibbons, 2002). Gibbons (2002) suggests some effective strategies for achieving this.

#### ***Story innovation***

In this activity students are asked to change words and events to fit in with the new characters who are changed also. The central meaning remains the same.

#### ***Innovating on the ending***

Students write a new ending to a story. They can work in groups or as a whole class.

#### ***Cartoon strip***

The students use the words of the dialogue to write in the speech bubbles and turn the story into a cartoon strip.

#### ***Readers' theatre***

Each student gets a role and reads the dialogue for that character. This activity provides a meaningful purpose for reading. Puppets can also be used in Readers' Theatre.

### ***Wanted posters***

Students are asked to design a poster for a character in a story incorporating as much of the information in the text as possible.

### ***Story Map***

After a story is read a visual representation of the main features of the story is read .

### ***Time Lines***

Learners illustrate the key events on a time line.

### ***Hot Seat***

Children seat in a circle. One of the chairs is called the hot seat. The student sitting in the hot seat represents a character from a book. Other students ask him questions to find more about his/her life. Children take turns being in the hot seat. They can invent information, but they mustn't say anything that is inconsistent with the story. The hot seat activity can be modified by travelling in time, backward and forward. The original story is being reconstructed and the whole process is thought -provoking and enriching experience.

### ***Freeze frames***

This is a kind of a drama activity. Students try to represent the key stages in a story by creating tableaux .This activity requires preparation, the group first decide on the key points in the story, then they decide how they will represent them and finally they practice moving from one to the other as quickly as possible, while the audience is with closed eyes.

### ***Cloze***

This is a traditional cloze exercise. The teacher makes deletions in the text and the students try to fill in the gaps. The teacher can offer a list of words that have been left out. This exercise can also be used for testing. This activity reflects the reading strategies that children are using to predict the meaning. These activities can focus on a specific category of items: adjectives, target vocabulary, connectives, pronouns past tenses and other. It is very important that after finishing the cloze, children discuss their choice of words and explain their rationale to the class.

**Monster cloze** consists of only a title and gaps. Students guess the missing words and the teacher writes any correct words in the appropriate gap.

### ***Vanishing cloze***

This is another version of close. The teacher selects a text and writes it on the board. He/she starts erasing some of the words and the students read the text and guess the missing word from memory. The teacher erases more and more words, and the students read and try to recall the missing words at the same time practicing grammatical structures or vocabulary.

### ***Text reconstruction***

The teacher cuts the text into paragraphs or sentences. The students try to put them in the right order and explain why they have chosen that order.

### ***Jumbled sentences***

The teacher takes a sentence from the text and cuts it into words. Children must reconstruct the sentence by putting the words into the right order.

### ***Picture and sentence matching***

Give the students pictures from the text and sentences that describe the pictures. The students match the pictures with the sentences.

### ***True/False Questions***

Children decide whether the given statements are true or false. The teacher should offer inferential statements as well, not only literal in order to check whether students can infer meaning and how much they have understood.

### ***Questioning the Text***

In order to make children aware of the hidden messages of the text, the teacher needs to ask different kinds of questions and use different kinds of activities. For example they can focus on the pictures, the characters or they can make lists of words or ideas that are associated with key people in the text. The teacher helps the children develop critical perspectives on what they read and predict what is not said. They can also change the key physical or personality characteristics of the characters. They can discuss stereotyping and try to make them aware that not all rules, descriptions or principles govern everywhere and what we read is not necessarily true.

We should expect that children have their own life stories and they influence the way they understand a message. We must treat them with empathy and sensitivity and always be open to new original interpretations and critical discussions.

## **4. Vocabulary and reading**

### **4.1 The relationship between words and reading-comprehension**

We would all agree that there is a strong reciprocal relationship between words and reading comprehension. It is expected that students with extensive vocabularies will do better on reading comprehension tests than students with smaller vocabularies. But as many studies have proved, reading-comprehension does not improve incidentally and spontaneously. Teachers need to make an effort to improve this process and that is by providing activities for thorough and deep understanding of words. Superficial knowledge of words is not enough and it will not contribute to better reading-comprehension. Dole, Sloan and Trathen (1995) discuss the kind of instruction that would help students improve their reading-comprehension. As the basis for their claim they refer to Bech and McKeown, who suggested some of the features of effective instruction, such as extensive practice with words, knowledge about the words, including both contextual and definitional knowledge and active student engagement that would lead to deep understanding of words.

Dole et al., (1995) added some other kinds of word knowledge that are important for better reading-comprehension, which is learning specific strategies for figuring out the meanings of unknown words on their own, also known as procedural knowledge about words. They also suggested another kind of knowledge of words which is not commonly taught, which is conditional knowledge. This knowledge is of great benefit for the students because it helps them understand why they are learning certain words and why those words are important to their literature selection. They claim that if students are equipped with this kind of knowledge, their understanding of what they are reading will improve. Sloan conducted a study in this field working with two groups of students. The first group was instructed with the traditional approach and the second with the alternative approach i.e. students were provided procedural and conditional knowledge. He conducted a pretest and a posttest and also compared their reading -comprehension on three reading selections. The alternative group scored much better on the tests than the traditional

group. He concluded that the students, who received alternative instruction, improved their comprehension more than students who received traditional vocabulary instruction. He explained that one of the reasons why this alternative approach worked well, was that students were taught select words according to specific criteria provided by Christian Sloan, words related to important aspects of the text such as characters, plot or setting of the selection. He ensured that students became aware of the effect of contextualized word learning i.e. students learned the meanings of new words as they were used in the texts. Another reason is that students received multiple exposures to words, and through using the words in context and discussions about the words, they gained thorough processing of the words, which contributed to word learning and comprehension improvement.

He concluded that using literature selections to teach students words is a great way. He emphasized that students should be provided with procedural and conditional knowledge about selecting important words and deciding how those words relate to the literature selection. He claims that his new ways of teaching vocabulary through literature to secondary English students will without doubt contribute to better reading-comprehension.

#### **4.2 Historical trends in second language vocabulary acquisition**

Vocabulary has been reviewed, researched and presented in different ways throughout the history of SLA. In the time of the Grammar-translation method students were prepared for translating long passages of the classics by being provided detailed explanation of grammar in their native languages, by memorizing paradigms and by learning bilingual vocabulary lists. Rivers (as cited in Zimmerman, 1997) explained that lessons consisted of a reading selection, two or three columns of new vocabulary items with native-language equivalents and a test. Students were assessed according to their abilities to analyze the syntactic structure. They were exposed to a wide literary vocabulary, which was used to illustrate grammatical rules. The teaching of vocabulary was based on definition and etymology throughout the nineteenth century. Bilingual word lists were organized

according to semantic fields and were part of grammars and reader books. This method has received criticism for many years, one of them being the objection to the neglect of realistic, oral language and use of archaic vocabulary lists. Some of the linguists attempted to rank vocabulary according to frequency which was seen as a rebellious method. These lists proved to be very accurate and are very similar to the lists compiled by modern, eminent linguists. This method was followed by the Reform Movement. Its supporters emphasized the importance of spoken language and phonetic training. Fluency was recognized as an important aspect and words came to be associated with reality rather than with other words or syntactic patterns. This resulted in selecting vocabulary according to the level of simplicity and usefulness.

The Direct method was introduced toward the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Zimmerman (1997) explains that its name originates from the principles it is based on i.e. relating the meaning directly with the target language without translation. The Direct Method claimed that natural language acquisition takes place through interaction. Target language was used as the language of interaction and instruction. Classes consisted mainly of teaching everyday vocabulary and sentences. Vocabulary was explained with labeled pictures and demonstrations, while abstract vocabulary was taught through the associating of ideas. The term *realia* was adopted in this period as objects were also used to demonstrate meaning. This method was criticized for being trivial.

The Reading method (1920/30) aimed at developing the reading skills in learners. In Great Britain, Michael West, (as cited in Zimmerman, 1997, p. 9) stressed the need to facilitate reading skill by improving vocabulary skills. He suggests that:

“the primary thing in learning a language is acquisition of a vocabulary and practice in using it (which is the same thing as acquiring). The problem is what vocabulary; and none of these modern textbooks in common use in English schools have attempted to solve the problem.”

West recommended using word frequency lists as the basis for the selection and order of vocabulary in student materials. The leaders of this movement aimed at developing a more scientific foundation and believed that language should be taught by practicing basic



structures in meaningful situation-based activities. Vocabulary was considered one of the most important aspects of second language learning and one of the priority was selecting the vocabulary content on a rational basis.

Charles Fries was the founder of the Audio-lingual method, also known as the structural approach. According to this approach foreign language learners faced difficulties during the acquisition process because of the conflict between the different structural systems. The focus of this method was on grammar or structure and systematic attention to pronunciation. It was believed that language learning is a process of habit formation. Students learnt grammar through examples. Teachers selected vocabulary items on the basis of simplicity and familiarity.

According to Fries (as cited in Coady and Huckin, 1997), the linguistics student should never make the mistake of identifying a language with its dictionary. He claimed that language learners oversimplified the role of words. This attitude was a product of some false assumptions about the nature of language. Some of them are that words have exact equivalents in different languages, a word is a single meaning unit, each word has a basic meaning and all other meanings are figurative and illegitimate. Fries argues against these false assumptions trying to illustrate the fact that words are linguistic forms that derive their meaning from the context. Learning too much vocabulary early in the learning process gives students a false sense of security, but this has resulted in theoreticians overemphasizing the role of grammar and treating lexical items as means for introducing grammatical topics. They weren't treated as items with communicative value. Fries's colleagues suggested a more balanced model which meant guessing word meanings from context, without abandoning the grammatical structures as a priority in the language acquisition. Chomsky (1965) introduced his belief that language existed in the individual apart from his communicating needs, and was represented by an abstract set of rule. This mental grammar or unconscious intuition about language was labeled as competence and the actual use as performance. His notion was challenged by Hymes (1972), who didn't reject his model but only emphasized the sociolinguistic and pragmatic factors and their primacy in effective language use. He defined communicative competence as the internalized knowledge of the situational appropriateness of language. This made

language learning to be treated as very different from the previous model of habit formation which resulted in a change of language instruction.

Now the focus of attention was on communicative proficiency rather than command of structures. This movement was known as communicative language teaching and according to Richards and Rogers (as cited in Zimmerman, 1997), it aimed to “make communicative competence the goal of language teaching and to develop procedures for the teaching of the four language skills that acknowledge the interdependence of language and communication” (p. 13). This method promotes proficiency over accuracy but vocabulary was not the focus of attention. The primacy was given to the appropriate use of communicative categories and language as discourse. Wilkins (1972) introduced two categories of meaning involved in communication, notional meaning and functional which later became the basis of the teaching syllabus. He claimed that in order to master the lexical system the learner must be exposed to the language to a great extent. The importance of frequency word-lists was decreased as they did not indicate the best order to teach words. Linguists claimed that L2 acquisition resembles L1 acquisition, which meant that the best way for its improvement is natural, communicative exposure to the target language.

The natural approach is based on its own set of hypotheses and its aim is to develop oral communicative ability in beginning students. Its theoretical model consists of five hypotheses introduced by Krashen and Terrell (as cited in Zimmerman, 1997): the acquisition-learning hypothesis, the natural order hypothesis, the monitor hypothesis, the input hypothesis and the affective filter hypothesis. This approach assigns a predominant role to vocabulary as a bearer of meaning in the language acquisition process. The focus is on the importance of interesting and relevant input and directing the students’ attention on the understanding of messages.

According to Krashen and Terrell (as cited in Zimmerman, 1997), “students’ attention is not on vocabulary learning per se, but on communication, on the goal of activity. In this way, we encourage true vocabulary acquisition”. (p. 15).

### **4.3 Reading- comprehension and vocabulary instruction**

“Good instruction is the most powerful means of developing proficient comprehenders and preventing reading comprehension problems....comprehension instruction promotes the ability to learn from text...comprehension instruction gives students access to culturally important domains of knowledge and provides a means of pursuing affective and intellectual goals” (Snow, 2002, p. 29).

There is a strong relationship between vocabulary and comprehension. A student cannot be expected to understand a text if he/she does not know most of the words. If students lack adequate vocabulary knowledge they will probably face a number of obstacles in the process of language acquisition. Most of us would assume that we can solve this by simply teaching our students more words, but as Nagy (1988) explains, it may not be true since not all vocabulary instruction increases reading comprehension. In his report made on the basis of the best available research, he gives examples of how teachers can use vocabulary instruction most effectively to improve reading-comprehension. He attempts at providing teachers not only with appropriate activities but also with knowledge of how and why they can use them. He claims that there are two main reasons for the failure of vocabulary instruction to improve reading-comprehension. The first reason is partial word knowledge. In order to understand the text students need to gain in-depth knowledge of the word which can be achieved through more intensive instruction. The second reason for ineffective vocabulary instruction relates to the comprehensibility of the text that contains new words. Teachers need not spent time teaching students words that do not hinder comprehension even if they are unfamiliar to them as this will not affect the comprehension of the text. The ability to infer meanings of unfamiliar words in the text has a great impact on vocabulary growth which implies that not vocabulary instruction, but more reading, results in vocabulary development. In order to prove that vocabulary instruction fails to improve reading-comprehension because of partial word knowledge, he draws on some studies in this field and synthesizes the results in order to create a picture of the effectiveness of different types of instruction. On the other hand, Snow (2002) claims that instruction that is designed to enhance reading fluency leads to fairly

significant gains in word recognition and fluency and to moderate gains in comprehension. It provides students with a repertoire of strategies that promote comprehension monitoring and foster comprehension:

“The explicitness with which teachers teach comprehension strategies makes a difference in learner outcomes, especially for low-achieving students” (Snow 2002, p. 33).

#### **4.4 Why teach vocabulary?**

Vocabulary refers to students’ understanding of oral and print words. Vocabularies include conceptual knowledge of words that goes well beyond a simple dictionary definition. Students’ vocabulary knowledge is a building process that occurs over time as they make connection to other words, learn examples and non-examples of the word and related words and use the words accurately within the context of the sentence.

Linguists claim that for successful communication learners should master the most frequent 2000-5000 items. It is a teachers’ responsibility to identify these words and teach their learners strategies for learning on their own. The choice of corpus, which is a selection of texts, depends on the needs and interests of the students. A corpus tells us about the frequency of words and expressions, differences in speaking and writing, contexts of use, grammatical patterns and strategic use of vocabulary, but it cannot tell us how to teach and what to teach and how students learn best. Teachers find teaching vocabulary as the basic component of the whole process of teaching them the language because of the type of the task, i.e. students learn words and forget them quickly. So, the question is what learners should know before we can claim that they have learnt a word. According to McCarten (2007) and Nation (2001), they need to know the meanings of the word, its spoken and written forms, its word parts, its grammatical behavior, its collocations, its register, its frequency and its connotations. McCarten (2007) suggests teaching these aspects little by little, depending on the usefulness of the word for the classroom and its “learnability”.

Students should be given practice in all of the areas of knowledge about the word they are learning and teach them strategies they can apply to learning other vocabulary. Learning all of the meanings of an item of vocabulary is a gradual and long term process and students need to be aware of this. It is also important that we divide vocabulary into words that we want our students to speak and write, active vocabulary, and words that we want our students only to recognize. The materials we use should present and practice the words in natural contexts and they should help students become better learners by teaching them different strategies and techniques they can use outside the classroom. Effective vocabulary teaching is based on a few principles.

The first principle is making them aware of the importance of mastering vocabulary because as Willkins, (as cited in Mc Carten, 2007) claims, “without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed” (p. 20).

According to Nation (2001), knowing what to learn is the basic principle of learning vocabulary. He calls this strategy “noticing” and the teacher can help them get into this habit. Variety is another principle to follow. It is very important that the new words are presented in an attractive content which includes pictures and sounds. Practice activities should be graded and should involve all students. There should be opportunities to use the vocabulary in a meaningful, personalized ways. Variety also refers to paying attention to different learning styles. There are learners who are “experiential”, “global”, “studial”, “analytic” and they all require different ways of learning.

Learning the new word requires lots of repetition of the word, seeing the word in different contexts and writing it and using it in different situations. According to Nation, (as cited in Mc Carter, 2007), words need to be encountered 5-20 times in order to be remembered. Others agree that repetition is an important strategy and active recalling of the word is an effective way of learning the language than simple exposure.

“Vocabulary should be reviewed as often as possible in activities that have students actively recall words and produce them rather than merely see or hear them” McCarten, 2007, p. 21).

Schmitt (1997) suggests organizing words under three broad headings: real-world groups, language-based groups and personalized groups. Real-world groups include groups that occur in the real world, language-based groups draw on linguistic criteria and personalized groups depend on students' own preferences and experiences. Students should not be overloaded with words as there are certain quantities of words they can absorb. The potential quantity is also affected by the complexity of the words. The success of the learners depends to a great extent to their time devoted to self-study, the variety of strategies they use. According to Gu (as cited in McCarten, 2007), "good learners seem to be those who initiate their own learning, selectively attend to words of their own choice, studiously try to remember these words and seek opportunities to use them." (p. 25).

Vocabulary acquisition is one of the most critical components of successful language learning. Teachers should introduce a few words at a time, starting with the most frequent, useful and learnable vocabulary and review vocabulary often in a variety of contexts. We should always encourage them to seek additional information on their own and personalize the learning experience according to their own specific needs.

#### **4.5 Essential strategies for teaching vocabulary**

Nagy (2005) claims that the relationship between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension is complex and when choosing ways of instruction teachers should consider that a long term comprehensive approach to promoting vocabulary growth should involve three components:

- Teaching individual words
- Exposure to rich language
- Generative word knowledge

Teaching individual words means giving students both definitional and contextual information and providing them with opportunities to process this information deeply by applying it in ways that require creativity and connections with their existing knowledge.

But teaching individual words is not enough. Exposure to rich language is essential to effective instruction. Reading aloud, storytelling, pretend play and even routine classroom conversation can promote vocabulary growth. Repetitive encounters with the words in text contribute to in-depth vocabulary acquisition although the benefits are felt slowly.

As learning words does not occur in isolation and it is impossible for children to acquire meanings of words in vacuum, vocabulary programmes should be designed to support children's word learning through a combination of approaches to teaching. Michael Graves, (as cited in Antonacci and O'Callaghan, 2012) offers a framework for successful vocabulary teaching and development of word knowledge. It is based on a four-part approach to developing robust vocabularies. It provides rich and varied language experiences, teaches individual words, teaches word-learning strategies and fosters word consciousness.

In order to enhance incidental word learning teachers should offer and encourage students to participate in a variety of rich language experiences such as: interactive read-alouds of children's literature, dialogic-based instructional activities, independent reading, interactive writing and creating a print-rich environment. This does not mean that systematic and direct instruction should be neglected as research has shown that there is a measurable growth of vocabulary as a result of this approach.

Not less important aspect is the aspect of teaching students strategies to discover the meaning of the words themselves. The context, the meaningful parts of the words and the dictionaries can help a lot. And finally we need to maintain their interest for words through word play.

Here are some vocabulary learning strategies suggested by Antonacci and O'Callaghan (2012):

**The Vocabulary Self-collection** strategy engages students actively in identifying important words from their reading to share with their class. The strategy is modeled by the teacher and then it is practiced. Students learn how to recognize new and interesting words, become word-conscious and develop vocabularies. Teachers demonstrate how to use the context to learn the meaning of the word.

**Word Mapping** is a strategy that depicts relationships between words and contributes to in-depth word knowledge. Semantic mapping engages students in mental processes which lead to a deeper understanding of word meaning by developing their conceptual knowledge. It helps them categorize words and see relationships among them. The strategy can be used to introduce new vocabulary, to use the new information they acquired through reading and as a follow up activity.

**“The Graphic Morphemic Analysis** strategy is an approach to word learning that will help readers unlock the meaning of new and challenging words by analyzing the meaningful parts within a word” (Nagy, 2005, p. 100). This approach enables the students to discover the meaning of the word into its meaningful parts. This is a cognitive strategy that enables students to learn derivational words by systematic analysis of its meaningful parts. This strategy can be employed before and after reading and will help them determine word meanings by considering each word’s context and morphemes.

**Interactive Word Wall** is a strategy which promotes a vocabulary-rich classroom environment and interactivity. Students use these words when reading and writing. This strategy can be used to introduce new vocabulary prior to reading, during reading when students look for new words that can be posted on the wall and after reading to expand on the meaning of the words.

**Vocabulary journals** help students to explore the meanings of the words. They are used by students “to respond and transact with words, concepts and ideas through the use of their own language” (Nagy, 2005, p. 110). One of the aims of this strategy is to engage students in explorations and can be used in all phases of the reading process.

There are many more approaches to vocabulary instruction, some of them being identified by The National Reading Panel (2000):

- Explicit instruction
- Indirect instruction through exposing students to a wide range of reading materials
- Multimedia methods



- Capacity method which refers to making reading an automatic activity
- Association methods which are based on drawing connections among words

In addition to this, Fisher and Blachnowicz (2005) recommend that the learning environment is word rich, vocabulary is addressed as a distinct area in the curriculum, careful selection of appropriate words for planned teaching and reinforcement is made. It is teachers' responsibility to make children able to determine the meanings of words that are new to them by using a range of taught word strategies (National Institute of Literacy, 2003).

#### **4.5.1 Intensive Vocabulary Instruction**

The definitional approach to vocabulary building offers superficial level of word knowledge. Most of the definitions that students learn about words are accurate, but are too limited. Sometimes they are too complex and they do not always contain adequate information to allow a person to use the word correctly. So when students are given a task to use a word correctly in an appropriate, meaningful sentence, given only the definition of the word, they find it difficult and confusing to complete the task. This is strong evidence that knowledge of definitions does not guarantee comprehension of a text (Nagy, 1988).

“Reading comprehension depends on a wealth of encyclopedic knowledge and not merely on definitional knowledge of the words in the text” (Nagy, 1988, p. 5).

When it comes to contextual approaches, Nagy (1988) claims that using context as a tool for teaching vocabulary should not be neglected, but should not be given primacy when teaching new meanings as it seldom provides proper information for the student who knows nothing about the meaning of the word. Instructing children to infer word meanings from context can help them develop learning strategies they can use on their own. But our aim should match the selection of context. If the teacher's purpose is to teach students strategies then he can choose vague contexts and if the purpose is to teach them in-depth knowledge about the word they will have to use highly artificial contexts.

Nagy (1988) suggests combining the definitional and contextual approach for more effective reading comprehension and vocabulary growth. He says that “it is the combination of definition and context that communicates the meaning effectively “ (p. 6). He further explains that definitions and contexts are essential requirements for good instruction, but methods that are most effective at improving comprehension provide much more than definition and context and are known as intensive vocabulary instruction. This approach possesses three properties: integration, repetition and meaningful use. The first property, integration, integrates target words with prior knowledge, so we conclude that this property is related to the schema theory which claims that knowledge is a set of relationships and that prior knowledge enables us to understand new information. *Semantic mapping* is one of these activities and it can serve a number of purposes. It activates background knowledge, it allows the teacher to identify and assess that knowledge and finally it provides a rich basis for further writing as well as reading. It has some limitations such as the impossibility to cover all the words listed for instruction, but this can be resolved by treating words in meaning-based groups which would enable the teacher to include additional words related to the theme. The biggest advantage of this activity is setting a purpose for reading and activating prior knowledge.

*Semantic feature analysis* enables establishing connections among the instructed items and also specifying such relationships. It works best for semantically related words because it helps students see what these words have in common in an organized, systematic way.

*Emphasis on concepts* is another technique that helps students not to treat words simply as new labels, but as new concepts. This can be achieved by starting a discussion about the meaning of a word, without mentioning the word itself. Thus students will be motivated to look for the label for a concept they have learnt than to remember just a new label. Emphasis on concepts can be practiced by considering examples and non-examples and discuss the cases.

*Repetition* was another property of effective vocabulary instruction. Research has indicated that if we are to improve reading comprehension, students need to be exposed to a number of encounters (McKeown et al. 1985). A teacher can provide multiple

encounters with new words without isolated repetition by providing opportunities for meaningful use which is the third property of effective instruction. The more the students are interested in the context, the deeper the processing of information and they are more likely to remember it. If students are expected to be able to deal with instructed words in context, the words must be encountered in context during instruction (McKeown, 1985).

According to Nagy (1988), effective vocabulary instruction requires students to process words meaningfully and consists of tasks that resemble normal speaking, reading and writing at the same time they elicit inferences. Such activity can be a multiple choice activity which asks the students to use the given meaning to make an inference word association activities, completion of sentences containing the target words. But this vocabulary instruction should be long-term in order to result in gains in reading comprehension. Readers must develop in-depth knowledge of the target words in a text before their comprehension is improved. Instruction must be intensive, rich, must relate new words with prior background knowledge and engage students in meaningful activities. Nagy (1988) explains that intensive instruction is not necessary for every unfamiliar word because sometimes reading provides opportunities for incidental word learning and systematic learning is not needed, but this is usually short-term learning. Learning from context does not possess the three above mentioned properties of effective learning, but Nagy claims that if extensive reading is regular it can provide all the characteristics of powerful vocabulary instruction and is “the major avenue of large-scale vocabulary growth” (p. 6). From what was said we can conclude that these statements contradict one another to some extent. But there is resolution to this only apparent contradiction and that is efficient use of vocabulary instruction which means identification of problematic vocabulary, the type of difficulties they will pose and the strategies for dealing with them.

Vocabulary growth is a result of both explicit instruction and incidental encounters with words in reading. Isolated vocabulary instruction cannot provide learners with enough words so as to increase their vocabulary measurably. There must be a balance of incidental learning and explicit vocabulary instruction which depends on the students, the text and the type of words involved.

According to Nagy, “....one needs to choose words very carefully for intensive instruction and make strategic use of minimal instruction” (Nagy 1988, p. 17) As suggested, intensive instruction is appropriate for conceptually difficult words, those that represent complex concepts which are not common words, for groups of words that have related meaning and when the words to be learnt are important to the understanding of a selection or their general usefulness of the language. Sometimes even difficult concepts can be acquired incidentally from a text, but how well they will be learned depends on the text. If they are conceptually explicit, incidental learning will improve.

The most important thing a teacher can do to promote vocabulary growth is to increase students’ reading and help them become independent learners. The teacher can approach word instruction and vocabulary growth through context and word structure analysis depending on the conditions explained above. I find this report extremely helpful in terms of making the teachers aware of possibilities for vocabulary instruction and the factors they are conditioned by.

## **5. Literary texts in the EFL classroom**

### **5.1 The Effect of Literature on Vocabulary**

We would all agree that most of the children nowadays lack motivation to read for pleasure and find literary language inadequate due to their poor experience in this area. Positive involvement of a conceptual and emotional nature with the variety of experience

and vocabulary that literature offers, will make children realize that the benefits regarding vocabulary when reading for pleasure, can be astonishing.

According to Cunningham (2005, p.50), the bulk of vocabulary growth occurs incidentally through exposure to language. As children struggle to read the text, they encounter many new words and in order to comprehend the text they are forced to learn the meaning of the unfamiliar words and incorporate them in their lexicon. Having analyzed many studies in this area she concluded that “the lexical density of oral language relative to written language is substantially degraded or impoverished, and indicate that text is a particularly effective way of expanding a child’s vocabulary compared to “interesting conversation.”

Cohen (1968) conducted a research whose objectives were related mainly with strengthening verbal readiness and heightening motivation to read and to increase vocabulary in socially disadvantaged children. The experimental variable was story reading. The selection of stories was made according to certain criteria and there was not limitation of vocabulary while unfamiliar words were used in such a manner that children could infer their meaning from the context. All this was accompanied with story reading activities, discussions, dramatizations, illustrative materials and follow-up activities. The experimental teachers read a story every day of the year and chose from the offered activities, while teachers in the control groups proceeded as usual. The results of the tests showed that the experimental group had an increase in vocabulary over the control group, increase in word knowledge and reading comprehension. She concluded that reading is vital in teaching reading and vocabulary acquisition and that ego-involvement and comprehension of concepts are important criteria in the selection of stories. Continual exposure to stories read aloud affects the basic, beginning stages in comprehension of oral and written language. Vocabulary is best learnt in a context of emotional and intellectual meaning.

## **5.2 Literature as a context for teaching vocabulary**

Dixon-Krauss (2001) investigated the use of literature as a context for teaching unfamiliar vocabulary to high school students. Her goal was to compare the effect of two types of

instruction. She did the investigation in this field with a teacher who had faced a problem in the area of teaching vocabulary. Namely, her students seemed to quickly forget the assigned words and could not use them in their writing or speaking. Krauss suggested taking a mediational approach to analyze the identified problems, which meant clarifying her intended purposes for vocabulary learning and then employing instructional strategies that match those intended purposes (Dixon-Krauss, 1996). According to the principles of the mediational method, the researcher had to determine the amount and type of support the students will need while learning progresses. As Dixon-Krauss (2001) explains, this model is dynamic and is based on the Vygotsky's cultural-historical theory. This design consists of three phases through which the teacher observes and analyses. In the first phase he identifies the problem, then he implements appropriate instruction and finally evaluates. So after observing to identify the action research problem they related it to the professional literature on vocabulary growth and concept development. In order to understand the problem better they reviewed substantial amount of studies on this topic. Vygotsky's work, (as cited in Dixon-Krauss, 2001) provided good theoretical basis for understanding the relation between vocabulary growth and concept development. He states that words are labels for concepts and children operate on different levels of potential concepts depending on their age. School instruction provides mediational support in the way that it helps them acquire scientific concepts. Through the process of explaining, comparing and sharing ideas, students learn to manipulate concepts and apply them in different contexts.

Dixon-Krauss (2001) draws on the results of many studies in this area. According to Beck and McKeown, (as cited in Dixon-Krauss, 2001), vocabulary knowledge comes from no knowledge, through a general sense of the word, narrow context-bound knowledge, having knowledge but being unable to access it quickly, to rich decontextualized knowledge. Dixon-Krauss claims that reviews of literature indicated that the most effective vocabulary instruction includes multiple exposures to words in a variety of oral and written contexts, with the average estimated rate of vocabulary growth approximately seven words per day, which reaffirms the previous findings that students should not be overloaded with vocabulary.

Nagy and Herman, (as cited in Dixon-Krauss, 2001) state that most of the word knowledge is acquired incidentally through wide reading, discussions and that learning one word at a time is relatively ineffective. Dole et al., (1995) claim that teaching vocabulary and word study within the context of literary texts, both during and after reading, were effective in increasing vocabulary.

This research reaffirmed many of the ideas presented above. Dixon-Krauss (2001) concluded that if vocabulary acquisition is to take place, students need to be offered numerous opportunities for reinforcement. It also showed that mediating on the part of the teacher affected students' use of words in their writing and discussions. Most of the words which were used in the instruction mediation cycles were used correctly in their discussions and writing. When students focused on the events of the story, the number of words they used correctly decreased. But when they responded emotionally to the conclusion of the book, the number of target words they used almost doubled.

According to Barton (2001), there is another reason for teaching vocabulary in the literature classroom, that is gaining fluency and helping students learn how these words relate to difficult ideas and concepts in the stories they read. He explains that "in concept-related vocabulary instruction, students link individual words with larger literature concepts" (Barton 2001, p. 83).

McKeown, (as cited in Cunningham , 2005) investigated the process by which children acquire unfamiliar word meanings through exposure to written language and concluded that high vocabulary children were more successful in deriving the meaning of an unknown word from text while children of low verbal ability experienced a misunderstanding of the relationship between words and context.

Building our students' vocabularies is just one important aspect in our literature curriculum. It is very important that we teach them a select group of words by providing meaningful practice than teaching them a large number of words superfluously. Meaningful practice means organizing these words into related groups, discussions about their placement and meanings and applying the words to literature you read in their classroom.

### **5.3 Storybook reading and vocabulary building**

Storybook reading is a strategy that can help teachers systematically build the vocabulary and comprehension skills of English-language learners. Read aloud can be used as effective practice for enhancing two of the critical components of reading instruction, vocabulary and comprehension. Because of the different levels of prior knowledge, language skills, flexibility and proficiency in students, teachers need to plan according to the diverse needs of the group of language learners. Instruction should address the academic, cognitive and language development that is critical for future success. It has also been proved that a student's level of vocabulary knowledge is an important predictor of reading comprehension. The flexibility of English language use, learning words in context, determination of importance and unimportance of text events and details, opportunities to discuss more skillfully, are very important aspects for the development of the comprehension skills.

As Cunningham (2005) implies, research has sought to find out which aspects of shared storybook-reading enhance children's language development and whether shared storybook reading leads to vocabulary growth. Different aspects of storybook reading were explored. According to Senechal and Cornell, (as cited in Cunningham, 2005), although single reading appeared to contribute to receptive vocabulary growth, it was not sufficient in enhancing expressive vocabulary. Later, Senechal (1997) found out that listening to repeated readings of a story facilitated children's expressive and receptive vocabulary growth. She also found out that active participation in reading was more helpful in the acquisition of expressive rather than receptive vocabulary.

Robbins and Ehri, (as cited in Cunningham, 2005) also helped to clarify the role of storybook reading on vocabulary development. Their research provided important information about the specific manner in which words are learned through shared storybook reading. They found that gains in vocabulary were greater for children with larger entering vocabularies and that exposures to words were necessary but not



sufficient for higher rates of word learning, but the general finding is that “book reading is a potent mechanism in the acquisition of vocabulary” (Cunningham, 2005, p. 56).

Nagy, Herman and Anderson (1985, p.251) investigated the effect of written context on vocabulary growth through incidental learning. Their study demonstrated “unmistakable learning from context from one or a very few exposures to unfamiliar words in natural text”.

Children benefit from this strategy even after acquiring the ability to read independently. Many studies in this field show that there are substantial vocabulary gains after hearing the story several times with no required participation or teacher explanation. Benefits of reading aloud or shared book reading have been found across a wide array of studies and their findings help to clarify the role of book reading behaviors and their effect on vocabulary growth. Results suggest that this mechanism is very important in the development of vocabulary in young learners. Stories help to stimulate students’ curiosity about the target culture and language, they encourage language acquisition, students’ language awareness, they supplement the restricted input in the EFL classroom. They help to internalize vocabulary and grammar patterns and they foster reading proficiency. Reading short-stories offer opportunities for revisiting the words learned and understanding and using them in real life communication which contributes to longer retention. (Al-Dersi, 2013)

#### **5.4 The effect of the pre-reading activity on vocabulary building**

When reading a story in the EFL classroom students might experience a problem related to their unpreparedness for a new subject or topic presented. This problem arises not because they lack background knowledge on this topic, but because that knowledge has not been activated. Pre-reading activities provide the reader with the necessary information for dealing with the content and the structure of the material. They also serve to focus their attention and to elicit prior knowledge. In order to be able to interpret the

text satisfactorily, the readers need to draw on appropriate schematic knowledge. Prior to reading, the teacher's duty is to help the reader recognize the key lexical elements that seem to be in close relationship with the topic and highlight their importance in an appropriate activity which will contribute to activating of the existing schemata.

According to Cook, (as cited in Ajideh, 2006, p. 5), "the mind stimulated by key words or phrases in the text or by the context activates a knowledge schema", which means that this may not be a conscious process, but rather an automatic cognitive response given to external stimuli. This can be achieved by assimilation of new concepts into already existing schemata, which will become altered or extended, or new information can be represented by new mental structures and the new knowledge will build a new schemata.

What we are not sure about is whether the pre-reading activity could affect vocabulary gain in story reading and if it could, to what extent. To the best of our knowledge, there is no empirical evidence on this subject, which makes us undetermined to use pre-reading activities for this purpose. We do not know what will happen if we incorporate the new, target words into the pre-reading activity and whether it will make vocabulary retention easier. The aim of this research is exactly this, to investigate into the process of vocabulary building during a story reading class and to study the effect of vocabulary focused pre-reading activities on the ultimate vocabulary gain from the story.

## **6. Research methodology**

### **6.1 Research questions**

This study aims to investigate the relationship between literary texts and vocabulary acquisition. Many linguists have claimed that literature offers great possibilities in the EFL classroom by involving the students emotionally into the learning process and by making them respond personally by activating the fifth skill, the "thinking" skill they acquire vocabulary more efficiently and enjoyably. The main goal of this study is to provide evidence that support previous findings, that literature contributes to better language

acquisition or to deny this by providing new evidence. The research questions addressed in this paper are the following:

- Do literary texts improve vocabulary knowledge in the EFL classroom?
- To what extent is the knowledge of vocabulary retained two weeks after the treatment?
- To what extent is the pre-reading activity important in the whole process i.e. what is its effect on vocabulary building?

## **6.2 Method**

### **6.2.1 Participants**

The participants who took part in this study were 57 primary school students just beginning the eighth grade. They had studied English for seven years in primary school. The experimental group consisted of 31 participants, 17 females and 14 males, the control group consisted of 26 participants of whom 11 were females and 15 were males. As all of the classes consisted of students with mixed abilities and were approximately at the same level of English, they were not changed. The first two classes, 8-1 and 8-2 were the control groups and the rest, 8-3 and 8-4 were the experimental groups. The average grades of the pretest showed that the classes were with a very similar structure in terms of students' vocabulary knowledge.

### **6.2.2 Instruments**

Three stories were selected to suit the participants' level and interest from a website <http://storystar.com/php/search.php>, Freddie Foo-the Frog (Appendix 2a), Impact- the Fire in Your Eyes (Appendix 3a), The Selfish Giant (Appendix 4a). Before implementing them in class, the teacher prepared a pretest for a selected vocabulary from the stories that was presumed to be new and unfamiliar to the students. The vocabulary pretest (Appendix 1) consisted of 40 words and was conducted a week before the treatment. The aim of implementing the test was to find out if any of the words were already familiar to

the students. The teacher prepared detailed lesson plans (Appendices 2b, 3b, 4b) for each story that was to be implemented in the control and experimental group. The lessons plans differed only in the pre-reading activity. The pre-reading activity in the experimental group involved implicit presentation of the new words, either the teacher gave a short summary of the text in which the new words were incorporated and the students were exposed to them unconsciously, or they were asked to look for the new words and try to explain them descriptively or with a symbol. In the control group this activity was replaced with another type of activity, where the students were not exposed to the target words, but were just making predictions about the events in the story, making associations related to the title or just brainstorming on different aspects of the story.

### **6.2.3 Procedure**

One week before the treatment the students were assigned pretests on the target vocabulary. The pretest consisted of 40 multiple choice questions. The target word, which was bolded, was used in a sentence, and four word options were offered below. The students had to choose the correct synonym option. The aim of using this pretest was to show if any of the new words were already familiar to the students, so that we could correctly measure their vocabulary gains from the treatment. After a week the students were presented to the stories according to a detailed lesson plan for each story. The lesson plan consisted of a pre-reading activity, during reading activities, post-reading activity and homework. Only the pre-reading activity differed in the control and experimental groups. When the stories were read and the activities completed, which lasted for a week, a story per lesson, the next week the students sat for a posttest (Appendix 1) which was the same as the pretest and was supposed to show how literary texts, in this case short stories, have affected vocabulary acquisition, with special focus on the effect of the pre-reading activity on the ultimate vocabulary growth. The activities for both groups are given below.

#### **I. Lesson activities: Freddie Foo-the Frog (Appendix 2 b)**

##### **a) Experimental groups**

The first story that was presented was Freddie Foo- the Frog, as it was pretty relaxing and enjoyable. The pre-reading activity consisted of rearranging sentences into the right order. The students worked in groups of four. Each group was given a different paragraph of scrambled sentences containing the target words and they were expected to put them into the right order and support their opinion on this. At the end of this activity they tried to predict the order of the paragraphs and see later, when they are introduced to the story, if they were right.

The first reading activity consisted of quick reading and scanning for the key points in the story.

The next activity consisted of students making questions for the offered answers and checking their correctness. This was followed by a vocabulary check, when students were given the target words and were supposed to pair them with the offered synonyms and supply one more word with the same meaning.

Next, they were given some phrases from the text, which added to the stylistic quality of the text, and they were asked to explain the meaning of the phrases and find an equivalent in their native language and also think of a situation when one might use them. All of the activities were performed in groups of four.

The post-reading activity offered opportunities for personal and emotional involvement of the students, when they were expected to deal with the moral message of the text on their own, based on their past experiences and then discussed their opinions together. And finally homework was given to write a different ending of the story and incorporate the new words. All of the activities can be seen in Appendix 2(b).

### **b) Control groups**

As mentioned above, the lesson plans differed only in the pre-reading activity. In the control groups the students worked in groups of four. Each group was given a sentence that was a subtopic of the story. They were required to write all their ideas that this sentence associated. Then they reported their ideas to the rest of the groups and discussed it together. The teacher wrote the key ideas on the board.

## **II. Lesson activities: The Selfish Giant (Appendix 4 b)**

### **a) Experimental groups**

The pre-reading activity consisted of a short summary of the story in which the target words were incorporated presented by the teacher. She tried to bring this story to life by using original phrases from the story, correct intonation and appropriate body language. While retelling it, she tried to repeat the target words so that the students would be exposed to them as much as possible. Then, in pairs they thought of the title of the text and voted for the best option.

The first reading activity consisted of quick reading and scanning for the key points in the story. The students discussed whether the events in the story were real or if it was a fiction story and provided evidence to support their opinion.

The next activity, Reciprocal teaching, consisted of students working in groups of four and investigating different aspects of the story. The first group was asked to look for information about the characters, the second looked for information related to changes in characters and seasons, the third looked for the new words, and the fourth looked for stylistic expressions. When they were ready, they reported and discussed their findings.

In the next activity students focused on vocabulary. They worked in groups of four and each group was assigned a section of the story and were asked to find the new words, write them in the notebook and try to infer their meaning from context. When they finished, a member of each group came to the board and wrote the explanations of the words. The teacher provided examples where necessary.

The aim of the next activity was focusing on the stylistic aspect of the story. Students were asked to think of equivalents for the offered expressions from the text in their native language and if possible to provide expressions with the same meaning.

The post-reading activity consisted of focusing on the moral of the story and drawing on past experiences. The students were asked to think of the thing that changed the giant and to find sentences that support their opinion. They worked in pairs.

For homework they were asked to remember or look for some other examples when love has changed somebody's life and to discuss the importance of love in our life in no more than two pages.

### **b) Control groups**

The pre-reading activity for the control groups consisted of a game of associations. The teacher wrote the word "SELFISH" on the board, and the students working in groups of four were asked to write the associations that this word conjured. Then they discussed their opinions and asked questions.

## **III. Lesson activities for "Impact- The fire in your eyes" ( Appendix 3 b)**

### **a) Experimental group**

The pre-reading activity is called The Scavenger Hunt. The students worked in groups of four. Each group was assigned a section of the text and the students were asked to look for the new words and represent them with a symbol. When they were ready, they discussed their symbols and their meanings with the rest of the class, which made them focus on the target words and elicit their meaning from the context.

The next activity consisted of the students listening to the teacher reading the story, and following it in their copies and at the same time trying to see whether the story was a description or the author was trying to communicate a message. This activity was followed by reading comprehension questions. The students were asked to reread the text, answer the questions and discuss other possible answers.

Next, a vocabulary check activity followed. The students were expected to substitute the bolded words in the given sentences with one of the options offered below. Each group was assigned different set of sentences, and when they were ready they read them aloud and discussed the correctness of the substitute.

In the next activity the focus was on some of the expressions in the text. The students were asked to think of other expressions in English with the same meaning and to find the best translation in their native language.

The post-reading activity required personal response on the part of the readers. They were asked to respond emotionally to one of the striking sentences in the story i.e. communicate their feelings that the sentence and visualization of the situation inspired in them.

For homework they were asked to think of some other professions that involve sacrificing one's life to save somebody else's life , the advantages and disadvantages of choosing that kind of job and how it could affect them and their family life.

### **b) Control group**

The pre-reading activity for this group consisted of brainstorming ideas about the events in the story. The teacher wrote the title of the story on the board, and the students tried to predict the events that might occur. At the end of the lesson they compared their predictions with the actual events in the story.

### **6.2.4 Scoring**

The pretest and the posttest consisted of 40 multiple choice questions. In each sentence the new word was presented in context and the students were expected to choose the best option from the four words offered bellow. For each correct answer they got one point. The total score of the test was forty points.

## **6.3 Results**

- *Research question 1. Do literary texts improve vocabulary knowledge in the EFL classroom?*

Table1. Results from the pretest and posttest 1 for the experimental and control group

Groups	Pretest		Posttest 1		Gain
	Mean	s.d.	Mean	s.d.	
Experimental N=31	9.97 24.92%	4.09	17.77 44.42%	7.89	7.8 19.32%
Control N=26	9.76 24.40%	5.73	16.12 40.30%	6.88	6.36 15.90%



From the results presented in Table1 we can conclude that literary texts do improve vocabulary knowledge to a great extent. This study provides supporting evidence for frequent integration of literary texts in the foreign language classroom and asserts that they can contribute to vocabulary growth. The results from the pretest show that some of the words were already familiar to the students, i.e. on average each student knew around ten words, in both the experimental and the control group, and after the treatment, after being exposed to the target vocabulary through the short stories according to the prepared lesson plans, they acquired on average eight more of the target words in the experimental group and six more in the control group. The experimental group demonstrated a gain of 7.8 or 19.32 % on the first posttest, while the control group had a gain of 6.36 or 15.90 % (see Table 1). A t-test for paired samples showed that there was significant difference ( $t=8,33$ ;  $p<0,05$ ) between the pretest and the posttest for the experimental group and a slightly smaller difference ( $t=6,35$  p;  $p<0,05$ ) for the control group. From this we can conclude that all the students enriched their vocabularies and benefited from the short stories in terms of improving their language competences in general.

- *Research question 2. To what extent is the knowledge of vocabulary retained two weeks after the treatment?*

Table 2. Results from the pretest, posttest 1 and posttest 2 for the experimental and control group

Groups	Pretest		Posttest 1		Gain	Posttest 2		Gain
	Mean	s.d.	Mean	s.d.		Mean	s.d.	
Experimental N=31	9.97 24.92%	4.09	17.77 44.42%	7.89	7.8 19.32%	17.06 42.65%	7.87	7.09 17.73%
Control N=26	9.76 24.40%	5.73	16.12 40.30%	6.88	6.36 15.90%	15.08 37.70%	5.41	5.32 13.30%

As Table 2 shows, the knowledge of the target vocabulary did not drop drastically two weeks after the treatment. The gain of the experimental group on the second posttest was 7.09 or 17.73% which is slightly lower than the gain on the first posttest, i.e. the difference is only 1.59% between the first and the second gain, while the gain of the control group on the second posttest was 5.32 or 13.30% which is also slightly lower than the gain on the first posttest which was 6.36 or 15.90%. A t-test for paired samples showed that there was significant difference ( $t=7, 53$ ;  $p<0, 05$ ) between the pretest and the second posttest for the experimental group and a slightly smaller difference ( $t=5,21$ ;  $p< 0,05$ ) for the control group.

These results assure us that if literary texts are incorporated in the EFL classroom through a detailed lesson plan and if the activities enable the students to be exposed to the target words implicitly and then explicitly through different activities, there will not be significant decline in the target vocabulary size, especially not if the pre-reading activity was created in the way to provide exposure to the target vocabulary. The results show that two weeks after the treatment most of the words are retained and their meaning is recognized. We can conclude that, the more the students are exposed to the target words, the less they forget them, i.e. the retention is better.

- *Research question 3. To what extent is the pre-reading activity important in the process of vocabulary building?*

As explained in the procedure, the students in the control group and the students in the experimental group underwent different treatment in the introductory part of the lesson. They were exposed to different types of pre-reading activities, i.e. the students in the control group did some warm up activities related to the topic of the story but during these activities these students were not intentionally exposed to the target words, while the students in the experimental group were involved in pre-reading activities which enabled them to be exposed to the target words implicitly. The results showed that these different activities affected the final vocabulary gain although not to a great extent. As presented in the table above, the students in the experimental group on average knew 9.97 or 24.92% of the target words before the treatment and the results on the first posttest show that they learnt 17.77 or 44.42% of the words i.e. the gain was 7.8 or 19.32%. The students

in the control group knew on average 9.76 or 24.40% of the target words and they learnt 16.12 or 40.30% of the target words i.e. the gain was 6.36 or 15.90% which is slightly lower than the gain in the experimental group. This implies that the type of the pre-reading activity affects vocabulary acquisition and multiple exposure to the target words leads to improved vocabulary growth. Although the t-test showed very slight difference in the vocabulary gain on the second posttest ( $t=1.1$ ;  $p < 0,05$ ) between the experimental and the control group, but slightly bigger than the difference on the first posttest ( $t=0,89$ ;  $p < 0,05$ ) it was sufficient evidence to imply that the higher gain in vocabulary in the experimental group is due to their multiple exposure to the target vocabulary, i.e. the pre-reading activity provided implicit instruction which contributed to better vocabulary gain and better retention.

The difference is small, but significant for this study as it contains the answer to one of the research questions investigated here and that is that the type of the pre-reading activity affects vocabulary acquisition when teaching vocabulary through literary texts to some extent or in other words, if the students are exposed to the target words in the pre-reading activity their vocabulary gain will be slightly higher. In order to obtain reliable results regarding the effect of the pre-reading activity on vocabulary acquisition, more investigation with a bigger number of participants is required.

## **7. Discussion**

The role of literature in the form of short stories has always been claimed to offer various advantages for EFL teachers and learners. Stories stimulate students' curiosity and involve them emotionally and personally.

“Read alouds are appropriate for all ages, because the language used in books is more formal and contains more sophisticated syntax and word choices than every day conversation. Read alouds are an opportune time to encourage students’

active engagement in discussing the meanings of the new words” (Sweeny and Mason, 2011, p. 5)

According to Garvie, (as cited in Mourao, 2009, p. 17) a story is a vehicle for all that is language learning, which includes the cognitive and affective factors. As Wright states: “in using stories in language teaching we are using something much bigger and more important than language teaching itself”, (as cited in Mourao, 2009, p. 17). In relation to the power of reading and vocabulary development Krashen (2012) claims that vocabulary is best developed through real encounters with the words in context, over time, and in small doses, which is recognized as true by all involved in teaching English as a foreign language.

Many other linguists have discussed the advantages of integrating literature in the English classroom. According to Lazar, (1993), “literature exposes students to complex themes and fresh, unexpected uses of language. A good novel or short story may be particularly gripping in that it involves students in the suspense of unraveling the plot. This involvement may be more absorbing for students than the pseudo-narratives frequently found in course books.” (p. 15).

Concerning the effect of literary texts on learners` vocabulary acquisition he explains that:

“While reading an extract from the play on their own, they may find themselves unfamiliar with some of the vocabulary in the extract. But by listening to the extract read aloud by the teacher , or better still acted out on cassette, they may be able to hazard a useful guess as to the meaning of a new word; a guess facilitated by their understanding of the relationship between the speakers and the intonation they use to express this.” (Lazar, 1993, p.18).

Many studies have been conducted to prove the positive effect of literary texts on the learners` vocabulary and the findings have implied that they contribute to vocabulary growth and better vocabulary retention.

This study was conducted to examine the effect of short stories on vocabulary building. It had three aims. The first aim was to determine whether literary text improves vocabulary knowledge in the EFL classroom, the second was to see to what extent the acquired vocabulary declines two weeks after the treatment and the final aim was to provide evidence for the effect of the pre-reading activity on vocabulary building when using short stories.

The stories were chosen according to two criteria, difficulty level and potential to motivate and provoke interest. The words that were chosen for teaching were the ones that the teacher assumed were new to most of the students. In order to see if any of them were already familiar to the students, a pretest was assigned. The pretest contained forty words and each correct answer was scored one point. The results from the pretest showed that some of the words were already familiar to the students, but also these results suggested that the possibility of guessing influenced the objectivity of the results on the pretest and the posttest which will be discussed in details in the section on the limitations of the study.

The results from this experiment support the findings from other studies that learners can acquire vocabulary from reading short stories, although in this case students have acquired the words not only through incidental learning while reading, but also by combining implicit and explicit methods of teaching by involving the students in different activities that provided input of the target vocabulary. The students in the experimental group were introduced to the target words as early as in the pre-reading activity, when they were exposed to them passively, by listening to the teacher summarizing the story or were asked to look for the new words and try to infer their meaning from context. The analysis of the results of the control and experimental groups shows that literary texts contribute to better vocabulary acquisition and should be incorporated in the EFL as frequently as possible. From the gains of the control group we can conclude that both groups benefited well from the short stories with a slight difference, i.e. the experimental group showed slightly higher gains due to the exposure of the students to the target words in the pre-reading activity which had a positive effect on the vocabulary acquisition. A t-test for paired samples showed that the difference between the pretest and the posttest, between control and experimental group was very small but still significant. The same

case occurred for the second posttest too, when a t-test also showed slight but significant difference between the control and the experimental group. This proves that the pre-reading activity has an effect on the vocabulary gain when integrating short stories in the EFL classroom. The target words in this study were introduced to the experimental group in the pre-reading activity, the while-reading activities, in the vocabulary check part and the students were required to use the words in the homework activity. The participants in the control group were exposed to the target words in the same activities except for the pre-reading activity, when they were involved in different types of predicting warm-up activities. This means that they were exposed to the target words four to five times which is less than what linguists claim is necessary for a word to be acquired.

As mentioned above, the figures show that the experimental group demonstrated a gain of 19.32 % on the first posttest, while the control group had a gain of 15.90 % (see Table 1) which is very similar to the results of Horst et al. study (as cited in Daskalovska, 2014) where the participants learned 22% of the tested words, and the study done by Dupuy and Krashen (as cited in Daskalovska, 2014) where the participants learned one in every five words. There are some other studies which imply that the participants can benefit much more from literary texts. For example in the study done by Waring and Takaki (2003), students learnt approximately 40% of the target vocabulary. These results are very similar to the results obtained by Brown et al. (as cited in Daskalovska, 2014), where the participants acquired about 48 % of the words in the reading-while-listening mode. Concerning the relation between word repetition and vocabulary growth, Horst et al (as cited in Daskalovska (in press), suggest that “with fewer than eight repetitions, growth is much less predictable and the role of other factors become more apparent” (p. 4).

There are some more studies that show that foreign language learners can acquire vocabulary from reading. Horst, Cobb and Meara (as cited in Daskalovska, in press) claim that the participants in their study learned the meaning of about 22% of the previously unknown target words while reading the simplified version of *The Mayor of Casterbridge* and the knowledge was retained for at least ten days. Concerning vocabulary retention, they concluded that words need to be repeated at least eight times in order to be learned

which implies that less exposure to words would result in some weaknesses regarding the knowledge of all aspects of the words. The findings in relation to retention of the vocabulary are also very similar, as this study has also shown that two weeks after the treatment there was very small decline in vocabulary i.e. the gain after the first posts test was 7.8 In the experimental group and 6.36 in the control group and two weeks after the treatment on the second posttest the gain was slightly lower 7.09 in the experimental group and 5.32 in the control group. We can conclude that vocabulary retention was slightly better in the experimental group due to the effect of the pre-reading activity.

Another study that was conducted to investigate the vocabulary learning gains from reading was the study of Waring and Takaki (2003) in which they used three types of tests. The results implied that students benefited best in the receptive knowledge of spelling (61.2%) and meaning (40%) but there were lower gains in the productive knowledge of meaning, only 18.4 %. Regarding vocabulary retention, they concluded that three months after the treatment half of the receptive knowledge was retained, but the productive knowledge dropped to 3.6 %. The findings of his study indicated that the learning effects from reading may not be long-lasting even if the words were encountered more than 15 times.

Brown, Waring and Donkaewbua (as cited in Daskalovska, 2014) used two different types of tests to investigate the learning gains from three input modes.

“The multiple choice test showed a learning gain of 48 % in the reading-plus-listening mode, 45% in the reading mode and 29% in the listening mode, which were retained three months after the treatment. The translation test showed a gain of 16% in the reading – plus –listening mode, 15 % in the reading mode and 2% in the listening mode, which were considerably reduced after three months” (as cited in Daskalovska, in press, p. 4). The findings of this study support what has been previously implied by many other studies, that the receptive vocabulary gains are greater than the productive and that the receptive knowledge is retained longer than the productive knowledge.

From the findings presented above and from the findings of this study we can conclude that there are vocabulary gains from reading literary texts, especially acquisition of the receptive knowledge and that the more the students are exposed to the words the longer the words are retained and the productive knowledge is greater.

Regarding the effect of the pre-reading activity on vocabulary building, the results of this study suggest that it affects vocabulary acquisition and retention to some extent. The experimental group, which was involved in a pre-reading activity which provided input for the target words, did slightly better on the first posttest and the second posttest as well. The findings again imply that the more frequently the target words are met, the better they are learnt and the longer they are retained.

## **7.1 Limitations**

This study has several limitations. First, the number of participants is not sufficient to imply firmly that these are the exact vocabulary gains and vocabulary retention rates when using short stories. Second, the participants read only three stories during a period of ten days, which is a very short period to give us the right to claim that the study has proved something. In order to collect reliable evidence the treatment should last for a longer period of time. Third, there were only two posttests, an immediate one and another one two weeks after the treatment, which is not enough to provide evidence about the dropping rate of the target vocabulary size during a longer period of time, so the findings about vocabulary retention are not complete. Next, there was only one test that measured only the acquisition of meaning and did not take into consideration other benefits of reading for vocabulary acquisition, such as partial knowledge. Finally, some of the students used guessing on the pretest and later on the posttests, although they were required not to do so, which obscured the objectivity of the results. In order to provide more objective results, further studies are needed that would include greater number of participants, reading more stories over a longer period of time and more than one test to determine what types of word knowledge are learned from reading because multiple –



choice tests can only measure meaning recognition and are very difficult to be constructed reliably. Using different types of tests will enable us to eliminate the possibility of getting false results due to random guessing.

## **8. Conclusion**

The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of short stories on vocabulary acquisition, to determine the decline of vocabulary two weeks after the treatment and to provide evidence for the effect of the pre-reading activity on vocabulary building. The results show that integrating literary texts in the EFL classroom is very beneficial for both the teachers and the students. As many linguists have claimed, learning vocabulary through authentic texts is an enjoyable process as it inspires, involves emotionally and requires personal response. We are all aware of the positive effect that short stories have on improving vocabulary, but still many aspects of vocabulary acquisition remain unclear. According to Al - Dersi (2013, p. 81) reading short stories increase vocabulary levels” by giving evidence of extensive and subtle vocabulary usage, and complex and exact syntax.” Rubin (as cited in Al – Dersi, 2013) defines vocabulary learning strategy as a process by which information is obtained, stored, retrieved and used and suggests that reading short stories can be one such strategy.

“The benefit of using shot-stories in EFL classrooms for developing vocabulary is that stories offer new words with the actual usage in many forms. This can help EFL learners to understand not only the meaning of the new word learned but also the usage in context”, (Al-Dersi, 2013, p.81).

As far as word retention is concerned, Waring, (as cited in Al-Dersi, 2013) claims that if a word is introduced but it is not recycled and revisited it is highly likely that it will be forgotten. Short stories offer opportunities for revisiting the words and enables learners to use them in real life communication, which contributes to longer retention. Another advantage of integrating short stories is that they are enjoyable and make vocabulary learning memorable and develop motivation for further learning.

The findings of this study assert the same. Students do benefit from reading short stories regarding vocabulary, i.e. their vocabularies have grown for about approximately 15 words from reading three stories in a period of ten days which is quite satisfying. They were exposed to different techniques for teaching vocabulary, implicit and explicit. The experimental group showed slightly better results, due to their implicit exposure to the target words in the pre-reading activity. This means that implicit teaching does have an effect on vocabulary building although not to a great extent, but still significant to be mentioned. Both groups underwent explicit vocabulary instruction after the reading of the stories which contributed to better learning and retention of the words. So, we can conclude that incorporating short stories with the combination of implicit and explicit vocabulary instruction has a very positive effect on vocabulary building. As far as the effect of the pre-reading activity is concerned, we can conclude that choosing different types activities for this phase, also affects vocabulary acquisition which implies that they should be carefully chosen depending on the aim of the lesson.

Short stories should be integrated more frequently in order to affect students' vocabulary to a greater extent and to get them into the habit of reading and acquiring vocabulary incidentally. It is not enough to find a good story and leave the students deal with it. The story should be chosen according to certain criteria such as interestingness and level of difficulty, but it is very important that the activities following the story embrace different vocabulary teaching strategies .Beck and McKeown (as cited in Dole et al., 1995) named several features of effective instruction such as extensive practice with words, definitional and contextual knowledge of words and active student engagement, which as they claim lead to deep processing. We should not neglect the pre-reading activity whose role is to

remind readers of what they already know i.e. to activate existing schematic knowledge and prepare them for the next activities. The importance of the pre-reading activity should not be underestimated as it is the activity that inspires and motivates learners for their involvement in the activities that follow.

It is our responsibility to introduce literary texts as a great possibility for mastering a foreign language and encourage the students to become avid readers thus showing them the easier and more pleasant way of acquiring vocabulary and improving their linguistic competences. Short-stories are practical tools for vocabulary building as they are not very long, they are not complicated for the students to work independently, they offer a variety of choice for different tastes and can be used in all levels. All these advantages are sufficient to convince us that short stories should be given preference while teaching and enriching the vocabulary in EFL learners' vocabulary knowledge.

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## **Appendix 1**

### **VOCABULARY TEST**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

School: Primary School "Nikola Karev", Kocani

Teacher: Marija Donceva

1. When he **put out** the fire, he went out for some air.

- a) set up
- b) lit
- c) extinguished
- d) ignited

2. Tom **ushered** me to the dark hall.

- a) let

- b) *took*
  - c) *invited*
  - d) *welcomed*
3. *All of the furniture was covered in **soot**.*
- a) *spider webs*
  - b) *white dust*
  - c) *black powdery substance*
  - d) *mud*
4. *He was happy about the new diving **gear**.*
- a) *mask*
  - b) *suit*
  - c) *equipment*
  - d) *submarine*
5. *He **furrowed his brow** when he heard the news.*
- a) *felt happy*
  - b) *felt excited*
  - c) *felt annoyed*
  - d) *felt weak*
6. *She **smirked** when she heard the question.*
- a) *raised her head*
  - b) *smiled in a silly way*
  - c) *laughed loudly*
  - d) *looked angrily*
7. *They could see **swarms** of people gathering in the streets.*

- a) crowds
  - b) small groups
  - c) sets
  - d) blocks
8. Ann was disturbed by the **piercing shriek** coming from outside.
- a) sharp cry
  - b) loud singing
  - c) deep roar
  - d) rough voice
9. John **summoned** his hidden strength.
- a) lost
  - b) forgot
  - c) called
  - d) left
10. Ema's arm was **shattered** after being struck by a car recently.
- a) bruised
  - b) painful
  - c) crushed
  - d) swollen
11. Tom had to go back into the **carnage**.
- a) building site
  - b) camp site
  - c) mass destruction site
  - d) work office

12. His shoulders have become **sturdy**.

- a) weak
- b) strong
- c) lowered
- d) thin

13. The tree **bears** sweet, tasty fruit every autumn.

- a) gives
- b) carries
- c) wastes
- d) destroys

14. The **ogre** was so angry that he destroyed the whole house.

- a) dwarf
- b) monster
- c) alien
- d) angel

15. She responded in a **gruff** voice.

- a) weak
- b) sharp
- c) rough
- d) loud

16. There are many **trespassers** nowadays.

- a) people who travel a lot around the world
- b) people who eat a lot of meat
- c) people who enter property without permission
- d) people who buy property to build on it

17. He was **grinning** at us while listening to the conversation.
- a) looking with attention
  - b) smiling from ear to ear
  - c) laughing loudly
  - d) staring
18. When he sees his grandfather he always jumps and **flings** his arms around him.
- a) claps
  - b) rubs
  - c) puts
  - d) waves
19. She was trying to **trace a plan** for the holiday.
- a) sketch activities in her mind
  - b) map the road to the place
  - c) choose a place to visit
  - d) plan how to get money
20. Children are so energetic, they always **leap**.
- a) run
  - b) hide
  - c) jump
  - d) yell
21. They could see something **drifting**.
- a) swimming
  - b) sailing
  - c) floating
  - d) crawling

22. Suddenly the shark **lunged** and they screamed.

- a) opened her mouth
- b) jumped foreword
- c) swam fast
- d) woke up

23. The crocodile was **lurking** beneath the surface.

- a) diving
- b) resting
- c) sleeping
- d) sneaking

24. The **frollicking** puppies played in the sand.

- a) small
- b) clever
- c) playful
- d) cute

25. I don't know why, but she suddenly **dashed**.

- a) felt sad
- b) collapsed
- c) stood up
- d) rushed

26. The swan **plunged** into the clear pool.

- a) played
- b) enjoyed
- c) dived
- d) looked



27. He **huffed and puffed**, trying to get to safety.

- a) ran here and there
- b) smoked cigar after cigar
- c) breathed loudly
- d) walked fast

28. They were acting like **goofs**.

- a) intelligent people
- b) confident people
- c) foolish people
- d) grown up people

29. He will be **prosecuted** for the crime.

- a) put in jail
- b) set free
- c) taken to court
- d) sentenced to death

30. The event made him **grow feeble**.

- a) become strong
- b) become happy
- c) become weak
- d) become angry

31. When he heard them coming, he **hastened** to the garden.

- a) crawled
- b) strolled
- c) walked slowly
- d) rushed

32. The **linnet** was hiding in the bushes.

- a) grasshopper
- b) girl
- c) bird
- d) butterfly

33. Light was coming through the **casement**.

- a) roof
- b) window
- c) hole
- d) crack

34. He fell asleep when the wind **ceased** roaring.

- a) started
- b) stopped
- c) kept
- d) grew stronger

35. The match was a **downright** disgrace.

- a) complete
- b) rude
- c) slight
- d) sad

36. He stared at him **in awe**.

- a) happily
- b) in pain
- c) in fear
- d) with disgust

37. The story **unfolded** as we didn't expect.

- a) began
- b) ended
- c) developed
- d) sold

38. The ground was covered in **hail**.

- a) white sand
- b) yellow leaves
- c) green grass
- d) frozen rain

39. All of the **slates** were broken.

- a) plates
- b) bricks
- c) tiles
- d) glasses

40. She **glared** at him, her cheeks flushing.

- a) stared angrily
- b) stared in fear
- c) stared joyfully
- d) stared sadly

## **Appendix 2(a)**

### ***Freddie Foo the Frog***

***By Dave Maze***

#### ***Freddie Foo the Frog***

*Animals are beautiful creations, but some of them can be downright spooky. The food chain is just the way of life in the wild. Bigger ones eat the smaller animals, and that's how it's always been. That's how the circle of life keeps spinning round and round.*

*On a hot summer's day in Florida, Freddie Foo the frog was gathering food in a swamp while his family waited for him on the opposite side's shore. Everything seemed to be*

going smooth until he saw it. Carnage the crocodile's eyes appeared out of the middle of the water and Freddie's frog bubble burst. It was at this point that he didn't care about getting food. His only concern was getting back to his fife (frog wife) Franny and fids (frog kids) Franklin and Fry. Carnage's eyes watched as he glared at Freddie and then turned around to glare at his trembling family. He turned to Freddie with an evil grin. Freddie panicked.

"How can I get them to safety?" he thought. "If I start leaping, he will come after me. If I don't, he'll go towards my family. If I get caught, he'll surely capture them when I'm dead and gone. Oh worries me. What do I do?"

It was at this moment that the superhero in Freddie came hopping to the surface. He traced a lily pad plan in his head so as to jump on the ones furthest away from his enemy. He figured this would be his only chance to buy some time and space.

Carnage started swimming towards the Foos when Freddie yelled.

"Hey you big green goof!" He thought for a second, realizing the irony that he too was green. Carnage turned around. "Yeah, you! I could jump pads around you all day!"

At this point Carnage changed his direction and began drifting towards Freddie. He inched closer and closer by the second. Freddie prepared himself for battle. He

stretched his thin green legs back, lifted his chin towards the sky and held the pose.

When Carnage was two feet away, Freddie made his move, narrowly escaping the crocs bite. He hopped off land onto the third lily pad to the right. Carnage followed his jump through the air and once Freddie landed, continued his chase. By the time

Carnage was at the second lily pad, Freddie had leaped to the sixth, heart pounding.

He was doing it! Outsmarting Carnage! His family was cheering as they watched their hero inch closer to their side of the swamp. At this point, Carnage seemed to give up.

Freddie got to the third last pad and stopped to take a breather. He figured danger was too far behind to be "dangerous" anymore. He huffed, puffed and waved to his family who cheered even louder as he leapt to the next pad. The finish line was so close he could almost taste it. Suddenly, Carnage's wife Chaos came out of nowhere and placed herself between Freddie and the rest of the Foos. Freddie thought about

*jumping over her, but it was too risky. She was patiently waiting for him to make a move, glaring with only her eyes sticking out of the water. When he didn't, she lunged forward, jaw open wide like a gigantic yawn. Freddie noticed her sharp edged teeth that were aligned perfectly with one another for maximum chomping strength. He jumped to the left pad avoiding the loud snapping of Chaos' bite. She chomped again to the left and this time he jumped to the right. Meanwhile, Carnage was lurking behind Freddie and inching closer by the second. Chaos continued chomping and missing Freddie who was hopping like a green Mexican jumping bean. Amidst all the chaos (no pun intended) he had completely forgotten about Carnage.*

*"Freddie! Behind you!" Franny Foo screamed.*

*Freddie turned around to see the massive mouth of Carnage coming towards him. His whole life flashed before his eyes. Growing up on a beautiful lake with his parents, meeting his wife Franny at the Third Annual Lilly Pad, Green's A Fad Party, moving to Florida during the wintertime and living in isolation on the Everglades and having two frolicking Frog children to call their own. Freddie could have given up then and there. Called it quits, and let Carnage win, but no! Freddie's a Foo and that is not the Foo way. Foos never surrender and most importantly they never quit.*

*Freddie could feel Carnage's breath on his legs as he back flipped through the air. He landed in the water behind his intended lily pad. The Foos were clutching each other, waiting to see if he was ok. After five seconds, Freddie appeared from under the water. The Foos smiled, but Franny knew that it wasn't over just yet.*

*Carnage told Chaos to watch the family while he kept focus on Freddie. His eyes were sharp and his stare was cold. He flew through the water like a torpedo while Freddie furiously froggy paddled to the lily pad in front of him. When he got to it, he continued escaping Carnage's bites by playing the pad-to-pad jump for your life game. He couldn't keep this up. It was only a matter of time before he got too tired to jump, but he wasn't going to let the crocodile couple hurt his family!*

*Freddie looked around for an object. Anything he could get his hands on. He found a branch floating beside him and snatched it up. He had a plan.*

*Carnage was making another push for Freddie who stood his ground. At the last second he threw the branch over Carnage's left side. Carnage's eyes followed the stick through the air until it landed twenty feet away in the water. Meanwhile, Chaos was still keeping her eyes on the Foos. As the stick was flying through the air, Freddie jumped under the cloudy water and began swimming through it in one direction. The direction his family was in.*

*Freddie was going on blind faith that he would stay swimming on the path to his family and that Carnage wouldn't realize he had been tricked. Meanwhile, Carnage was pushing through the water in the area where the stick landed. After thirty seconds of searching, he found the stick and realized that he had been fooled. He turned around to see Freddie's head sticking out of the water about ten feet from Chaos and his family.*

*"Chaos!" he yelled across the swamp. She turned to him.*

*"What is it?" she asked.*

*"He's getting away!" Carnage motioned his long mouth in the direction of Freddie.*

*Chaos saw this and immediately dashed for him. Freddie kept paddling until Chaos was three feet away. Suddenly he stopped and stood up on a lily pad he had been using to help swim across the water. Freddie jumped and catapulted over Chaos who watched him fly through the air in shock. He landed one foot short of the land and pulled himself out of the water to reunite with his family. They hugged for a moment until realizing that the danger was not over. The crocodiles were headed their way, but slowed down along the way. They were tired out. They looked defeated, depleted and embarrassed. They plunged back in the water. The Foos let out a sigh of relief. Luckily for Freddie, the adrenalin in his body and love for his family kept him going until the end.*

*The Foos began hopping away into the sunlight. Freddie and Franny held each other as Franklin and Fry were playing Leap Frog.*

*"Play with us Daddy!" Franklin said while smiling.*

*"Daddy's...Daddy's tired boys."*

*“Aw, booo,” they cried.*

*“Just for a minute. Pleeessssssse,” Fry pleaded. They looked up at him with Tadpole-like eyes.*

*“Oh, you boys know I can’t say no when you give me that look!”*

*Freddie was hoping to never play Leap Frog again after what happened in the swamp. At the same time he was thankful that his whole family survived a life-threatening situation.*

*He learned a valuable lesson that day; that life’s too short not to take advantage of every moment given. One needs to drop the past, live in the present, and let the future unfold as it is meant to be.*

*So here he was, tired and achy, yet there was nothing more that he would rather do than leap with his two boys. Nowhere else he would rather be than in the company of his loving family. The boys leapt, Franny laughed and the Foos disappeared into the glowing Florida sunset. It was the perfect ending to a not so perfect day.*

*\* No frogs or crocodile’s were harmed during the writing of this story.*



## **Appendix 2 (b)**

### **Lesson plan1 –Freddie Foo The Frog**

**Level:** *Pre-intermediate / Intermediate (8 grade-12 years old)*

#### **Objectives:**

- **educational**
  - *to expand their reading competence in terms of variants of lexical choice and style*
  - *to learn to appreciate word-play to achieve imagery, contrast..and other effects*
  - *to become aware of the effect of metaphorical language use*
  - *to learn new vocabulary*
  - *to revise the Present Simple Tense and Past Simple Tense implicitly with special focus on the irregular verbs*

- ***pedagogical***

- *to remind them about the rules of nature i.e. the circle of life*
- *to become aware of the importance of our families and every moment of our life*
- *to highlight the importance of determination to succeed and belief that everything will be fine in the end*
- *to think critically and express opinion*
- *to understand the moral of the story and benefit from it*
- *to encourage affective reading*

- ***Pre-reading stimulus (experimental group)***

*The students work in groups of four. The teacher gives each group three sentences containing the target words. The students are supposed to order the sentences and predict the order of the events in their paragraph. When they are ready with ordering the sentences in their paragraph, a member of each group reads the sentences aloud and discusses their choice by supporting it with evidence. Then all of the groups agree to the final order of all the sentences and paragraphs and further during the lesson, they compare their version with the original text*

- ***Pre-reading stimulus (control group)***

*The students work individually. They skim the text to get a general idea of the text, they don't read for details. After they have read the text, they share the points in the story they found most important and*

- ***First reading activities***

*The students work individually. They scan the text to get a general idea of the text,*

*they don't read for details. After they have read the text, they share the points in the story they found most important and interesting.*

*The teacher writes some sentences on the board. The students work in pairs. They are supposed to write the question for the answers contained in the sentence. Then they discuss and suggest optional questions.*

1. *Freddie Foo.*
2. *Carnage.*
3. *He was trying to escape.*
4. *Chaos.*
5. *He traced a lily pad plan .*
6. *His family.*
7. *They were cheering.*
8. *That family is most important.*
9. *Life is too short not to take advantage of every moment given.*

- **Vocabulary check.**

*The students work in groups of four. They are given a list with the new words and they are supposed to make semantic webs i.e. match the new word from the text with its closest words in meaning offered on the list and add one more word to it. When they are ready, they draw the webs on the board and discuss other possibilities.*

*Here is the list of the words:*

- |          |               |
|----------|---------------|
| a) Leap  | complete      |
| b) _____ |               |
| c) Drift | painful       |
| _____    |               |
| d) Lunge | stare angrily |

e) <i>Lurk</i>	<i>rush</i>
f) <i>Frolicking</i>	<i>dive</i>
g) <i>Dash</i>	<i>sneak</i>
h) _____	
i) <i>Plunge</i>	<i>float</i>
j) <i>Goof</i>	<i>jump foreword</i>
k) <i>Glare</i>	<i>bite</i>
l) <i>Achy</i>	<i>playful</i>
m) <i>Chomp</i>	<i>jump</i>
n) <i>Snatch</i>	<i>foolish person</i>
o) <i>Downright</i>	<i>grab</i>

- Look at the expressions below. Find them in the story and think of their contextual meaning. Think of a situation when you may use them. Work in pairs. Discuss and support your opinion.

1. To go smooth..-
2. ..his frog bubble burst..-
3. ..the superhero came hopping to the surface..-

4. *..he traced a lily pad plan..*
5. *..he huffed and puffed..--*
6. *..he froggy paddled to the shore..*
7. *..like a green Mexican jumping bean..-*
8. *..he was going on blind faith..-*

- **Post-reading activity**

*Work in pairs. How do you understand the sentence “One needs to drop the past, live in the present, and let the future unfold as it is meant to be. “*

*Have you had a situation in your life that has made you realize this? Describe it. What else did you learn?*

- **Homework:**

*Innovate the ending of the story. Think of some other events that may have changed the happy ending. What was it that made Freddie Foo the frog win? Write down your opinion in no more than two small pages and discuss it with your friends.*

### **Appendix 3(a)**

#### *Impact – The Fire In Your Eyes*

*Life happens so fast. We seldom stop to think about how our actions affect other people. We don't realize that doing or saying something that's minor to us has the ability to change someone's life forever. One should always think about the impact that can be made on this world and the people in it and not be afraid to leave their mark, even in unexpected places.*

-----

*It's Halloween. A bone chilling wind howls through the air. Little Danny's arms are beginning to hurt from a full tote bag of candy. There's just one more house on the block to go to before heading home.*

*Danny walks eagerly up the brick stone steps as his father watches under the orange glow of the street lamp behind. He raises his small, pale hand. His knock is timid. The door swings open.*

*"Trick or treat!"*

*"Well, look at you." The muscular man smiled. "Looks like that firefighter helmet's a bit big."*

*Danny adjusted it, revealing the front of his fire red hair. Innocent blue eyes stared straight through the man, to the silver candy filled bowl behind him.*

*"There, now I can see you." The man chuckled. "Do you want to be a fireman when you grow up?"*

*"Well, I did, but...but..."*

*"But what?"*

*"But the kids at school were all making fun of me. They said I look stupid in my coat. That I could never put out a fire because my hair would just set it off again."*

*The man motioned Danny's father over.*

*"Well, that's not true at all. Look at me." Watery eyes stared up as the man pointed to his buzzed orange hair. I've put out hundreds of fires and saved hundreds of lives. If you want to be a firefighter, you can be the best one there ever was."*

*"You're a firefighter?" Danny's eyes opened wide like the sky. The man nodded.*

*"Rick." Danny's father extended his hand.*

*"John," the man shook strong.*

*"It looks like your son has enough candy to last him a long time. I've got something better."*

*"What could be better than candy?" Danny said with sincere curiosity.*

*"You'll see. Here, come in from the cold for a moment." He ushered them to the warm foyer. "I'll be right back." He ran up the spiral staircase.*

*Rick shrugged at Danny and helped unzip his rubber yellow coat. Seconds later, John came rushing down the stairs like a kid headed for the tree on Christmas morning.*

*"Here." He bent to hand Danny a picture.*

*"What's this?" Danny asked.*

*"You see that woman holding her baby?" Danny looked down at the glossy image. He could see a woman hugging her baby, who was covered in soot. John was in the background, dressed in full gear, smiling. "This is my favourite picture," he said. "I saved that baby from a burning apartment and returned her to her mom."*

*"Wow!" Danny's innocent blue eyes lit up like sparking sapphires. "Wait, but if I take it, you won't have it anymore."*

*"Your son is quite a gentleman. How old are you, Danny?"*

*"Eight."*

*"Well, Ocho Dan." The boy furrowed his brow. Rick smirked. "I have plenty of copies. Whenever I'm unsure of myself, or question why I do the job I do, I look at this picture. That's all I need to know that I'm doing the right thing."*

*"Cool." His helmet almost fell, sitting crooked on his head. "Can you sign it?"*

*"I'd love to." He pulled a red sharpie from his pant pocket like a magician would a nickel.*



*"I wasn't planning on it, though." He winked at Rick.*

*"Thank you so much!" Danny said as he took the freshly autographed picture back.*

*"You're very welcome."*

*Rick checked his watch. "We should get going now."*

*"Thanks again!" Danny's grin spread from cheek to cheek. John waved.*

*When they got home, Rick gave Danny a frame. He put the picture on a nightstand next to his bed.*

-----

*The towers were hit. As Clouds of smoking chaos filled the air above, swarms of terrified people scrambled on the streets below. He had never seen anything like it. Nobody had.*

*Beads of sweat lifted the dirt from his cheeks as they trickled down to the ashy floor. He scanned from left to right and heard it again.*

*"Help!" the piercing shriek echoed down the corridor of the 75th floor. He bolted down the hall as if his heavy suit were made of feathers.*

*"Hello?" he yelled. A horrifying scream stung his ears. There were no words behind the terror. He found her lying under a fallen desk, leg crushed beneath. Without a moment's hesitation, he summoned his inner Hulk and moved the heavy wooden desk just enough to free her shattered limb.*

*"I'm going to pick you up." His assuring voice slowed her tears. "Ready? Three, two, one." She recoiled in pain as he placed her upon sturdy shoulders. As he ran down the*

*hall he motioned to three petrified adults huddled in a corner. "Let's go!" They all headed for the stairs.*

*Every step posed a new challenge, but instinct motivated him to push on. By the time he stepped to ground level, the other building had fallen to the ground like a sand castle, dusty and destroyed by the tide. It took mere minutes to locate a vacant ambulance. When he did, the woman couldn't stop thanking him. He nodded and turned around. Dark blue eyes stared up at the burning anarchy before him, reflecting the fire. He took a deep breath and moved forward.*

*"Wait!" a concerned voice reached out to him. "You dropped this."*

*The man turned around to see the picture of a mother and her baby in her hands. "Thanks," he said.*

*"I never got your name..."*

*"Danny." He stared at the picture for a moment, put it back in his jacket, and vanished back into the carnage.*

## **Appendix 3(b)**

### *Lesson plan 2*

**Level:** *Pre-intermediate / Intermediate (8 grade-12 years old)*

#### **Objectives:**

- **educational**
  - *to expand their reading competence in terms of variants of lexical choice and style*
  - *to learn to appreciate word-play to achieve imagery, contrast and other effects*
  - *to become aware of the effect of metaphorical language use*
  - *to learn new vocabulary*
  - *to revise the Present Simple Tense and Past Simple Tense implicitly*
  
- **pedagogical**
  - *to raise their awareness about the importance and necessity of this profession*

- *to become aware how sacred and humane is to sacrifice your own life in order to save another*
- *to think critically and express opinion*
- *to understand the moral of the story and benefit from it*
- *to encourage affective reading*

### ***Pre-reading stimulus (experimental group)***

- ***Scavenger hunt***

*The teacher asks the students to hunt for new, important words from the text and draw a symbol that gives a mental picture of the word. They work in groups of four and each group hunts in a given section of the story. When they are ready a member of the group explains the meaning of the symbol associated by the word. (Thus they become acquainted with the new target words and try to predict the meaning, which in turn activates their existing schemata)*

- ***Pre-reading stimulus (control group)***

*The teacher writes the title of the story on the board. The students try to predict the events in the story. They work in pairs. The teacher writes their predictions on the board and at the end of the lesson they compare and see who had the right predictions*

- ***First reading activities***

*As the students read and listen to the text at the same time they decide whether the text is a description or the author is trying to communicate a message.*

*The teacher briefly checks the comprehension of the text with short and simple questions.*

*They are told to read the text again and look for the answers and then work in groups and ask and answer the questions among each other which at the same*

*time contributes to practicing the language, sharing opinions and checking reading-comprehension.*

- 1. How many characters are there?*
- 2. Where does the action take place? How do you know?*
- 3. Describe the firefighter.*
- 4. How does the boy feel while he is listening to the story?*
- 5. What's the impact of this acquaintance on Danny's future?*
- 6. What was always in his pocket?*

- **Vocabulary check.**

*Work in groups of four. Replace the bolded words in the sentences with appropriate substitutes from the list below. Explain why you chose that word as a substitute.*

*Group A*

- 1. He **put out** the fire with a blanket.*
- 2. Ana **ushered** me to the exit.*
- 3. My books were covered with soot.*

*Group B*

- 4. The **gear** was too heavy for him.*
- 5. He didn't talk, he only **smirked**.*
- 6. **Swarms** of people were gathered in the streets.*

Group C

7. She couldn't sleep because of the **piercing shriek** coming from the next room.
8. When in trouble, we **summon** our hidden strengths.
9. Her leg was **shattered** in the crash.

Group D

10. You don't get **sturdy** shoulders by sleeping all day long.
11. She **recoiled in pain** when he took her in his arms.
12. The **carnage** was an awful place to be at.

Choose from these words: **equipment, smiled in a silly way, strong, took, crowds, sharp cry, mass destruction site, crushed, call, extinguished, took, was unable to bear the pain**

- Look at the expressions below and think of expressions with the same meaning. Then discuss the equivalents in your language.
  - a. a bone chilling wind-
  - b. the man shook strong-
  - c. his innocent eyes lit up like sparking sapphires-
  - d. the boy furrowed his brow-
  - e. beads of sweat-
  - f. he summoned his inner Hulk-

- **Post-reading activity**

Try to interpret your feelings and emotions that this sentence creates in you: " He stared at the picture for a moment, put it back in his jacket, and vanished back into the carnage". Discuss what made you feel like that.

- **Homework:**

*Think of another profession where people sacrifice their lives in order to save other people's lives. Would you like to perform that kind of job? Why? How would you feel? How will it affect your family life? Can you take risks? Express your opinion on this topic in no more than two pages.*

## **Appendix 4 (a)**

### **The Selfish Giant**

**By Oscar Wilde**

*Born 1854, M, from New York, United States*

#### **THE SELFISH GIANT**

*Every afternoon, as they were coming from school, the children used to go and play in the Giant's garden.*

*It was a large lovely garden, with soft green grass. Here and there over the grass stood beautiful flowers like stars, and there were twelve peach-trees that in the spring-time broke out into delicate blossoms of pink and pearl, and in the autumn bore rich fruit. The birds sat on the trees and sang so sweetly that the children used to stop their games in order to listen to them. "How happy we are here!" they cried to each other.*

*One day the Giant came back. He had been to visit his friend the Cornish ogre, and had stayed with him for seven years. After the seven years were over he had said all that he*

*had to say, for his conversation was limited, and he determined to return to his own castle. When he arrived he saw the children playing in the garden.*

*"What are you doing here?" he cried in a very gruff voice, and the children ran away.*

*"My own garden is my own garden," said the Giant; "any one can understand that, and I will allow nobody to play in it but myself." So he built a high wall all round it, and put up a notice-board.*

### *TRESPASSERS WILL BE PROSECUTED*

*He was a very selfish Giant.*

*The poor children had now nowhere to play. They tried to play on the road, but the road was very dusty and full of hard stones, and they did not like it. They used to wander round the high wall when their lessons were over, and talk about the beautiful garden inside. "How happy we were there," they said to each other.*

*Then the Spring came, and all over the country there were little blossoms and little birds. Only in the garden of the Selfish Giant it was still winter. The birds did not care to sing in it as there were no children, and the trees forgot to blossom. Once a beautiful flower put its head out from the grass, but when it saw the notice-board it was so sorry for the children that it slipped back into the ground again, and went off to sleep. The only people who were pleased were the Snow and the Frost. "Spring has forgotten this garden," they cried, "so we will live here all the year round." The Snow covered up the grass with her great white cloak, and the Frost painted all the trees silver. Then they invited the North Wind to stay with them, and he came. He was wrapped in furs, and he roared all day about the garden, and blew the chimney-pots down. "This is a delightful spot," he said, "we must ask the Hail on a visit." So the Hail came. Every day for three hours he rattled on the roof of the castle till he broke most of the slates, and then he ran round and round the garden as fast as he could go. He was dressed in grey, and his breath was like ice.*

*"I cannot understand why the Spring is so late in coming," said the Selfish Giant, as he sat at the window and looked out at his cold white garden; "I hope there will be a change*



*in the weather."*

*But the Spring never came, nor the Summer. The Autumn gave golden fruit to every garden, but to the Giant's garden she gave none. "He is too selfish," she said. So it was always Winter there, and the North Wind, and the Hail, and the Frost, and the Snow danced about through the trees.*

*One morning the Giant was lying awake in bed when he heard some lovely music. It sounded so sweet to his ears that he thought it must be the King's musicians passing by. It was really only a little linnet singing outside his window, but it was so long since he had heard a bird sing in his garden that it seemed to him to be the most beautiful music in the world. Then the Hail stopped dancing over his head, and the North Wind ceased roaring, and a delicious perfume came to him through the open casement. "I believe the Spring has come at last," said the Giant; and he jumped out of bed and looked out.*

*What did he see?*

*He saw a most wonderful sight. Through a little hole in the wall the children had crept in, and they were sitting in the branches of the trees. In every tree that he could see there was a little child. And the trees were so glad to have the children back again that they had covered themselves with blossoms, and were waving their arms gently above the children's heads. The birds were flying about and twittering with delight, and the flowers were looking up through the green grass and laughing. It was a lovely scene, only in one corner it was still winter. It was the farthest corner of the garden, and in it was standing a little boy. He was so small that he could not reach up to the branches of the tree, and he was wandering all round it, crying bitterly. The poor tree was still quite covered with frost and snow, and the North Wind was blowing and roaring above it. "Climb up! little boy," said the Tree, and it bent its branches down as low as it could; but the boy was too tiny.*

*And the Giant's heart melted as he looked out. "How selfish I have been!" he said; "now I know why the Spring would not come here. I will put that poor little boy on the top of the*

*tree, and then I will knock down the wall, and my garden shall be the children's playground for ever and ever." He was really very sorry for what he had done.*

*So he crept downstairs and opened the front door quite softly, and went out into the garden. But when the children saw him they were so frightened that they all ran away, and the garden became winter again. Only the little boy did not run, for his eyes were so full of tears that he did not see the Giant coming. And the Giant stole up behind him and took him gently in his hand, and put him up into the tree. And the tree broke at once into blossom, and the birds came and sang on it, and the little boy stretched out his two arms and flung them round the Giant's neck, and kissed him. And the other children, when they saw that the Giant was not wicked any longer, came running back, and with them came the Spring. "It is your garden now, little children," said the Giant, and he took a great axe and knocked down the wall. And when the people were going to market at twelve o'clock they found the Giant playing with the children in the most beautiful garden they had ever seen.*

*All day long they played, and in the evening they came to the Giant to bid him good-bye.*

*"But where is your little companion?" he said: "the boy I put into the tree." The Giant loved him the best because he had kissed him.*

*"We don't know," answered the children; "he has gone away."*

*"You must tell him to be sure and come here to-morrow," said the Giant. But the children said that they did not know where he lived, and had never seen him before; and the Giant felt very sad.*

*Every afternoon, when school was over, the children came and played with the Giant. But the little boy whom the Giant loved was never seen again. The Giant was very kind to all the children, yet he longed for his first little friend, and often spoke of him. "How I would like to see him!" he used to say.*

*Years went over, and the Giant grew very old and feeble. He could not play about any more, so he sat in a huge armchair, and watched the children at their games, and admired his garden. "I have many beautiful flowers," he said; "but the children are the most beautiful flowers of all."*

*One winter morning he looked out of his window as he was dressing. He did not hate the Winter now, for he knew that it was merely the Spring asleep, and that the flowers were resting.*

*Suddenly he rubbed his eyes in wonder, and looked and looked. It certainly was a marvellous sight. In the farthest corner of the garden was a tree quite covered with lovely white blossoms. Its branches were all golden, and silver fruit hung down from them, and underneath it stood the little boy he had loved.*

*Downstairs ran the Giant in great joy, and out into the garden. He hastened across the grass, and came near to the child. And when he came quite close his face grew red with anger, and he said, "Who hath dared to wound thee?" For on the palms of the child's hands were the prints of two nails, and the prints of two nails were on the little feet.*

*"Who hath dared to wound thee?" cried the Giant; "tell me, that I may take my big sword and slay him."*

*"Nay!" answered the child; "but these are the wounds of Love."*

*"Who art thou?" said the Giant, and a strange awe fell on him, and he knelt before the little child.*

*And the child smiled on the Giant, and said to him, "You let me play once in your garden, to-day you shall come with me to my garden, which is Paradise."*

*And when the children ran in that afternoon, they found the Giant lying dead under the tree, all covered with white blossoms.*

## **Appendix 4(b)**

### **Lesson plan 3**

**Level:** *Pre-intermediate / Intermediate (8 grade-12 years old)*

#### **Objectives:**

- **educational**

- *to expand their reading competence in terms of variants of lexical choice and style*
- *to learn to appreciate word-play to achieve imagery, contrast..and other effects*
- *to become aware of the effect of metaphorical language use*
- *to learn new vocabulary*
- *to revise the Present Simple Tense and Past Simple Tense implicitly with special focus on the irregular verbs*
- *to become familiar with some of the old English forms*

- **pedagogical**

- *to raise their awareness about how important it is to be generous*
- *to become aware that selfishness can leave you without friends and joy*

- to think critically and express opinion
- to understand the moral of the story and benefit from it
- to encourage affective reading

- **Pre-reading stimulus (experimental group)**

*The teacher sums up the story with focus on the unknown, target words. He/she tries to bring it to life by using correct intonation, original phrases and body language. While retelling it, he/she tries to repeat the target words so that the students will be exposed to them as much as possible. Then, in pairs they think of the title of the text.*

- **Pre-reading stimulus (control group)**

*The teacher writes the word “ SELFISH “ on the board and asks the students to work in pairs and think of ideas, concepts or sentences related to this word which represents a human feature. Each pair discusses their ideas and answers questions that the teacher or the other students may ask.*

- **First reading activities**

*As the students read and listen to the text, they discuss whether this story is based on real events or it is a fiction story. They provide facts to support their opinion.*

- **Reciprocal Teaching**

*The teacher assigns students particular roles when reading. They work in pairs. One pair looks for information about the characters, another looks for information related to the changes in the characters and changes in seasons, another looks for unknown words...Then they report their findings to the rest of the class and*

*discuss and add up what was left out.*

- **Vocabulary check.**

*The students work in groups of four. Each group is assigned a section of the text and they are supposed to look for the new words, write them down in their notebooks and elicit their meaning from the context, i.e. write their own description of the meaning of the word. When they are ready, a member of each group comes at the board, writes the words and explains their meaning. If it is necessary the teacher gives some more examples of the use of the new word and provides some more synonyms.*

*Example: he **longed** for his little friend...-he missed him a lot, he wanted him to be there...*

*These are the new words: **bear, ogre, gruff, trespassers, prosecute, hasten, linnet, casement, cease, awe, hail, slate, fling, wicked, cloak, slay**. If all of them are not explained by the students, the teacher writes the left out words, asks questions and together with the students they describe the meaning of the words or supply synonyms.*

- *Look at the expressions below and think of expressions with the same meaning. Then discuss the equivalents in your language.*

- 1. broke out into delicate blossoms-*
- 2...went off to sleep--*
- 3. Snow covered up the grass with her great white cloak--*
- 4. he rattled on the roof of the castle--*

5. *The giant's heart melted..-*
6. *to bid him good-buy-*
7. *grew old and feeble--*

- **Post-reading activity**

*Work in pairs and express your opinion about this question: What is it that changed the Giant and turned him into a good giant? Provide evidence, sentences from the text, to support your opinion.*

- **Homework:**

*Think of another example when love has changed someone. How has it changed his/her? Is love important in your life? Explain why. Express your opinion on this topic in no more than two pages..*





**Marija Donceva**

**LITERARY TEXTS AND VOCABULARY BUILDING**

**THE EFFECT OF THE PRE-READING ACTIVITY ON VOCABULARY ACQUISITION**

**University “Goce Delcev” - Stip**